



# The Cutter

*The Newsletter of the Foundation for Coast Guard History*

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## CONTENTS

Annual Awards	1-5
Polar Activities	5
DC3 Bruckenthal	6-11
Latest Projects	12
Editorial	13
President Tyler/ Revenue Cutters	13-17
National CG Museum	17
Lincoln and <i>Miami</i>	18
Mackinaw's Last Trip	18
Monster Waves	19

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## 2005/2006 AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Annually, The Foundation for Coast Guard History recognizes notable contributions that preserve and promote knowledge of Coast Guard history. Each year the competition becomes more intense. Interest in this program is growing.

**UNIT HISTORY AWARD:** Given to Units that increase public awareness of current activities or the rich heritage of the United States Coast Guard.

The 2006 Large Unit winner is **Coast Guard Training Center, Yorktown, VA.** The Training Center developed and printed a walking tour brochure highlighting the historic points on station. This significant effort increased the public's knowledge of both Coast Guard history and the history indigenous to the Training Center. The unit also developed a history website ([www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/info/history.shtm](http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/info/history.shtm)) highlighting the various points on the brochure, including the USCGC Cuyahoga Memorial, the USCGC Unimak Memorial, Enlisted Ratings Exhibit, National Aids to Navigation Museum, the Olde Yorke Chapel and more. They also established a new display featuring items donated by the family of LT Colleen Cain in Cain Hall, the first woman to pilot the HH-52A as well as the first female pilot to die in the line of duty, in 1985.

The 2006 Small Unit winner is **Station Merrimack River, Newburyport, MA.** Coast Guard Station Merrimack River took up a community cause when they provided the manpower for cosmetic improvements to the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport, Massachusetts, including painting, plastering, cleaning and installing new display cases in the "Coast Guard Room" of the facility. Station members helped reorganize and update the exhibits, arranging them chronologically, starting with a scale model of the Revenue Cutter Massachusetts and artifacts representing the other agencies that came together in the creation of the modern day Coast Guard, ending with a display of the Coast Guard's response to Hurricane Katrina. (see page 2)

**HERITAGE AWARD:** This award is given to individuals who helped preserve the heritage of the U.S. Coast Guard prior to the establishment of the Foundation. This year the Foundation is pleased to recognize two individuals who have spent many years doing noble work to preserve our heritage.

The first is **CDR Maurice Gibbs, USN (Ret)**. Commander Gibbs has played a major role in the preservation of the history of the Coast Guard and U.S. Life-Saving Service, both on his native Nantucket Island and nationwide. He is past Director of the Nantucket Historical Association, past President of the Nantucket Life-Saving Museum, and past President of the United States Life-Saving Service Heritage Association, which he ran for six years. He is currently treasurer of that national organization. Maurice is also an active member of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary.

He admits to "some involvement with other nonprofits." In 1995, he became interested in preserving lifesaving stations around the country and was instrumental in forming the U.S. Lifesaving Service Heritage Association. With the National Park Service they are inventorying what's left—to find out condition, owners, and future viability. There remain about 140 old historic stations built before 1950, some as far back as the 1870s, on the East and West Coast, on the Great Lakes and the Gulf Coast.

The second individual to be recognized for decades of devotion is **CWO4 Ken Black, USCG, Ret**. We can only quote from [www.lighthousedigest.com](http://www.lighthousedigest.com): "Ken said, 'Lighthouses are like people. They come in many different sizes, shapes and colors.' Years later, in my talks, I added the word 'brightness,' which is something Ken never would say, probably because he's much more of a gentleman than I am.

"But what impressed me the most was his true

dedication to the cause of saving lighthouses, their history, and the artifacts associated with them. He loves to do his best to make people into 'believers.' To make them believe how vital it is to save our lighthouse history for the next generations.

"I consider Ken Black my mentor, but first and foremost, I consider him my friend. I can tell you for a fact that I never would have started *Lighthouse Digest* or Lighthouse Depot or helped form the nonprofit American Lighthouse Foundation if it had not been for Ken Black.

"However, the facts are clear. Ken Black is one of only a few people, and I mean probably less than five, who started saving lighthouse artifacts and history way before it became, shall we say, 'fashionable.' He had a

**Lighthouses are like people. They come in many different sizes, shapes and colors.'**

vision that no one else had. He still has that vision and has never lost sight of it.

It is a vision to save and preserve, and to share with the public, lighthouse artifacts that otherwise would have ended up in the trash heap or in someone's private collection to never again be seen.

"The Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland Maine has the largest collection of lighthouse lenses and lighthouse equipment to ever go on display in a museum anywhere in the United States. This museum would not exist if not for the efforts of Ken Black. We started calling him 'Mr. Lighthouse' many years ago, and it's a name that has stuck and is well deserved.

"The Maine Lighthouse Museum is something that Ken can be proud of, and we can all be proud for him. The Maine Lighthouse Museum will live on forever, as a legacy to Ken Black, a man with a vision."

**BOOK AWARDS:** Annually, The Foundation reviews the books published during the previous year that relate to Coast Guard history and heritage and those that relate to light-houses and aids to navigation. A committee of scholars selects those of exceptional quality for recognition.

**Best Book on General Coast Guard History:**  
*Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol, 1942*  
 By Thaddeus Novak Edited by P.J. Capelotti  
 University Press of Florida, 2005  
 www.upf.com Hardcover, 206 pages, \$59.95

Servicemen weren't supposed to keep diaries during World War II. America went to great lengths to suppress any information about troop movements that might fall into the hands of the enemy, even reading every piece of mail that moved from the States to servicemen far afield and vice versa. So the fact that through *Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol* we are able to read about the daily life of a Coast Guardsman performing his duties aboard the converted fishing trawler Nanok is simply amazing.

Novak, or Nowakowski as he was born, at times thought of tossing his diary overboard while at sea, and even received one scare when one of his superiors found out about it and threatened him with time in the brig. In the end, the officer retreated from his threats and told Novak to "take it home and stash it somewhere. Don't show it to anyone until the damn war is history!" Five decades later, Novak sent his six-month wartime diary to the Coast Guard Historian's Office in Washington D.C.

The tale begins in Boston, as Novak and the rest of the crew await their new skipper, a rough and tumble, heavily-accented Danish sailor named Magnus Magnusson, and orders to ship out from Constitution Wharf. The opening log entries of the book offer a wonderful glimpse into wartime seafront Boston.

Then, at sea, Novak profiles each and every member of the crew (complete with nicknames) as they come into importance in his life. Seasickness becomes a regular fact of life, as do boredom and his relentless pursuit of a coxswain's rating. Once the Nanok reaches Greenland, the crew interacts with the natives of the island, attends bad movies ashore at the local army base just because they're there, and works at consuming every ounce of beer in the country.

The personal observances of the ice fields offshore, the back and forth hand-signed banter that accompanies the bartering with the natives, and even the descriptions of searches for waterfalls to supply the Nanok with pota-

**"take it home and  
 stash it somewhere.  
 Don't show it to any-  
 one until the damn  
 war is history"**

ble water set a serene backdrop for a war-time book. Novak's good fortune at not being in a heavy combat area is not lost on

him. When possible, he reports on events in Europe and the Pacific, always mindful that he is relatively safe while his fellow countrymen are dying by the thousands elsewhere.

Yet tragedy strikes locally for both individuals and full crews in these pages; hence the title of the book.

At least one can rest easy in the knowledge that not only does one get a good read – one that because of its nature will probably never be duplicated – but that all of the royalties from the sale of the book go directly to support the Foundation for Coast Guard History. Editor P.J. Capelotti, recipient of the Foundation for Coast Guard History's award for the best book on the heritage of the service in 2004 (for *Rogue Wave: The U.S. Coast Guard on and After 9/11*, reviewed in *The Cutter*, issue 19 Winter 2006) completes the story of the Nanok through his deep knowledge of the history of Greenland and the service. In the end, he was the right man for this book.

Honorable Mention goes to:

*Ten Hours Until Dawn: The True Story of Heroism and Tragedy Aboard the Can Do* By Michael Tougias St. Martin's Press, Hardcover, 322 pages [www.michaeltougias.com](http://www.michaeltougias.com)

It's not easy looking at this book through the eyes of an impartial reader and reviewer. Fact is, I lived through the Blizzard of 1978 with the rest of New England. The rest of New England, that is, except for the 99 people that died as a result of the horrible storm that struck our region on February 6 of that year. They died by freezing to death; by the hand of the slow, painless and silent killer carbon monoxide as they sat buried by snow in their cars with blocked tailpipes, trying to stay warm; and they died by drowning, like the young Amy Lanzikos of Scituate, Massachusetts, the same age I was at the time of the storm.

My recollections of the storm at six years old were of massive amounts of snow, unbelievably strong gusts of wind, and of water rushing its way down our streets, forcing my family's evacuation to higher ground outside of peninsular Hull. I never remember being scared; perhaps I wasn't yet aware enough of the ways of the world to be so.

Yet, even without that acuity at that time, I still can just think of the premise of Michael Tougias' latest book, *Ten Hours Until Dawn*, and realize that as bad as we thought the Blizzard of 1978 was for those of us on land, I will never have the power to imagine what it must have been like to be out there on the ocean at the height of the storm.

In fact, many people were caught at sea during the "Blizzard," as it is known to the people of New England, some by choice, others not. Tougias, a talented and well-known veteran writer of natural themes around New England, has taken a step out of his usual genre and tackled an essentially human story that traces

the last moments of the crew of a pilot boat that voluntarily headed to sea on February 6, 1978 to save lives.

Tougias is aided in telling the story by live recordings taken that night of the communications between the pilot boat, Frank Quirk's Can Do, the Coast Guard, and various other people ashore anxiously awaiting their return. His thorough and diligent research turned up dozens of people somehow affected by the eventual and ultimately unexplained loss of the boat and crew: family members, Coast Guardsmen ashore and at sea in motor lifeboats, 41-foot utility boats, the 95-foot cutter Cape George and elsewhere and more.

The author skillfully reconstructs personalities lost during the storm, bringing back to life, for a little more than 300 pages, a rugged ex-Seabee pilot boat captain in Quirk and his close friend Charlie Bucko, decorated Vietnam veteran with the Marine Corps and a wise-beyond-his years ex-Coast Guard coxswain. While reading the book, readers will hope that against all odds Quirk and Bucko will find a way to survive the mother of all storms.

*Ten Hours Until Dawn* will not soon be forgotten by any reader, whether you lived through the Blizzard or not. Once placed back on the bookshelf, it will be a book that you will from time to time just reach out and touch, out of emotional necessity, and memories of a well-crafted and thoroughly well written tale.

**Best Book on Aids to Navigation:** *Images of America: Point Sur*. Carol O'Neil  
Arcadia Publishing. [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com)  
Softcover, 128 pages

One would hardly believe it possible that an author could find more than 200 images of a remote light station, let alone 200 quality im-

ages suitable for publication in a pictorial history book. And even if one did find the photos, it would be difficult to believe that there would be enough human interest in the history of a remote light station, simply because of the relative lack of human activity at that lighthouse over the course of time. Somehow, in *Images of America: Point Sur*, Carol O'Neil has pulled this off.

The key to the book's successful layout and narrative flow lies in the numerous photos of the construction of the lighthouse, the roadways to it, and the various other man-made features that complete the station. The human story is trumped by the engineering story, the tale of the structure itself.

Arcadia Publishing prints more than 300 titles per year; few truly stand out. Carol O'Neil's *Images of America: Point Sur* is the best in its class, and deserved of a good read.

Book reviews written by John J. Galluzzo

**Other books reviewed**, in no particular order  
Coast Guard Heritage category:

*Hooligan Sailor: The Saga of One Coast Guardsman in World War II* by Leon Fredrick, Hazelwood Publishing

*The 1954 Historic Adventure of the Northwind* by Phil Jaffe, Third Millennium Publishing. Reviewed in *The Cutter* 19 Winter 2006.

*Rescue at the Top of the World*, Shawn Shallow, Paradise Cay Publications. Reviewed in *The Cutter* 16 Spring 2005.

*Images of America: Coast Guard Base Elizabeth City*, Elizabeth City Wardroom, Arcadia Publishing

*When Hull Freezes Over: Historic Winter Tales from the Massachusetts Shore*, John J.

Galluzzo, The History Press

*Lanterns & Lifeboats: A History of Thunder Bay Island*, Stephen Tongue, Sarge Publications

Lighthouse category:

*Historic Cape Cod Lighthouses: Race Point*, Jim Claflin, Kenrick Claflin and Son

*Images of America: Guarding Door County: Lighthouses and Life-Saving Stations*, Stacy and Virginia Thomas, Arcadia Publishing

*Images of America: Lighthouses and Lifesaving Stations of Virginia*, Patrick Evans-Hylton, Arcadia Publishing

*Lighthouses of New Jersey and Delaware: History, Mystery, Legends & Lore*, Bob Trapani, Jr., Myst and Lace Publishers

*All of these books are well worth a few hours or a few days of reading time. The number of books commemorating our heritage is growing. The authors need encouragement. Buying books, sharing books, reading books is a noble endeavor.*

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**POLAR ACTIVITIES** The Coast Guard operates the nation's only icebreakers. They have been funded by the National Science Foundation in its pursuit of knowledge of the Polar regions. In an effort to reduce costs, NSF recently outsourced to the Russian Icebreaker *Krasin* for Antarctic work. The *Krasin* broke down in McMurdo Sound and had to be rescued by the *Polar Star* on only 48 hours notice. Semper Paratus!

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**Moving?** In the Coast Guard, many people are transferred frequently. After they retire many cannot get out of the habit of moving every few years, so they pack up to go to another new experience. To the Foundation they are lost. Don't become a lost soul. When you move, tell us. You can post to the address on page 1 or e-mail to: fred@fcgh.org .

## DC3 NATHAN BRUCKENTHAL A Hero in Today's World

By any standard Nathan Bruckenthal was a hero. Then he went to Iraq. Then he went to Iraq again. There, he gave his life for his country. Compiled from several sources, this is his story.

“ DC3 Nathan Bruckenthal gave the ultimate sacrifice while serving the Coast Guard in Iraq. His valor will always be remembered, and his memory eternally honored” *Coast Guard Magazine*.

Jonathan Martin, *Seattle Times* 3 May 2004

“From his remote Coast Guard post at Neah Bay, Nathan Bruckenthal, a transplanted New Yorker, took 9/11 personally. He flew home three times to help bury the dead and feed rescuers. On his final trip, he stripped off his Coast Guard T-shirt and left it on the rubble.

Then Bruckenthal cut short his tour of duty at Neah Bay to get more intense law-enforcement training. He wanted to fulfill what his commanding officer, CWO Mike Tumulty, called Bruckenthal's mission to be a "patriot, warrior and hero."

"When those twin towers were destroyed, he was very passionate to fight the war on terrorism," said Tumulty. "His sacred ground was forever ruined."

On April 24, (2004) Bruckenthal, 24, died along with two Navy servicemen when suicide bombers attacked a pumping station they were guarding in the Persian Gulf. He was the first Coast Guard member to die in combat since the Vietnam War.

The son of a police chief in a New York suburb, Bruckenthal was known as a tireless volunteer during the two years he spent at Neah Bay, from 2001 to 2003. Bruckenthal worked as a reserve police officer, firefighter, emergency-services responder, assistant football coach and mentor to young Makah Indians.

The Makah responded with a memorial ceremony that incorporated all of Bruckenthal's roles. Tribal chairman Ben Johnson presented gifts to Coast Guard members to deliver to Bruckenthal's wife, Patti, who was three months pregnant: a hand-painted oar and a traditional wool blanket symbolic of the tribe's protecting embrace.

"He freely gave of his time and didn't ask anything for it," said T.J. Green, chief of the tribal police. "He gave unconditionally to this community."

Bruckenthal's older sister, NoaBeth Bruckenthal, said her brother's time among the Makah was formative. He defended the Makah's controversial decision to renew their traditional whale hunts, for example, and he made an oar for a family friend as a wedding gift.

"I know he was grateful for the things he grew to know out there--to open your heart to new people and cultures," said his sister, of Ashburn, Va. "He had tremendous respect and wanted to help out in any way (he) could."

Nate and Patti Bruckenthal most recently lived near the Coast Guard Air Station in Opa-Locka, Fla., but the couple was considering returning to the waters and mountains of the Pacific Northwest that he loved, his

sister said.

Bruckenthal, served as a damage-control officer, requiring him to use his skills as a carpenter and welder to fix boats in the heat of combat.

But he hungered for more action, volunteering for a hazardous rescue on the Strait of Juan de Fuca and responding to 50 emergency-services calls as volunteer, Tumulty said.

"Nate was everybody's humanitarian," said Tumulty. "He was into the mission and going out to rescue people."

Bruckenthal and his wife also were both active in the Makah community, though neither was a tribal member. When they first met, she was working in a Makah special-education program through her college. He proposed on

**"patriot, warrior  
and hero."**

**"Nate was everybody's  
humanitarian,"**

scenic Bowman Beach near the reservation. They married at the Space Needle on St. Patrick's Day, 2002.

He first served in Iraq in 2003 and decided to return for a second three month tour in March. Despite his enthusiasm for his mission, he had e-mailed a family friend to say he was growing anxious. "He basically said he was scared, not knowing if this was going to be his last day," friend Robert Engelbert told New York's Newsday newspaper.

Bruckenthal's remains were transported to Dover Air Force base in Delaware before burial, which occurred May 7, 2004 at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

During his first tour in Iraq, DC3 Nathan Bruckenthal was interviewed by PAC Peter Capelotti, USCGR on 25 April 2003

Place: Bahrain

**Q:** What unit are you attached to?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** TACSOUTH [Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team South].

**Q:** What's a DC3 do for a TACLET?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I essentially do a lot of different jobs. My job with the LEDET [Law Enforcement Detachment] is that I'm just a . . . right now I'm a boarding team member. One of eight. I'm going to BO [Boarding Officer] School in the next . . . well as soon as we get home I'm going to BO School. So as of right now I'm just a boarding team member. My job varies, you know.

**Q:** What's the difference between a team member and an officer? Is that why there's got to be someone in charge of a boarding?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** The Boarding Officer is the person who will make contact with the master of the ship. The boarding team member will do the initial safety inspection and deal with the crew; jobs along that line.

**Q:** How long have you been in the Coast Guard?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Five years.

**Q:** And you enlisted out of high school?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** No, I enlisted about a year

and a half after high school. I decided that college was . . . Actually I just . . . I was going to be in a PD (Police Department) and I just wanted to get some college so I could make it above Sergeant. I still got that (goal), so I'm just trying to get this so I can get some college and then still become a police officer or a firefighter. That's what I want to do.

**Q:** Well you certainly have picked a place to get some experiences.

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Definitely.

**Q:** And how long have you been with the TACLET; your whole career so far in the Service?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** No, I've been all around the place. I've been at the TACLET now for about nine months.

**Q:** And what did you do before that?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** First out of boot camp I was on an 82-foot patrol boat out of Montauk, New York.

**Q:** Which one?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Point Wells [WPB-82343], and then I went to DC "A" School and then I was at Station Neah Bay. It's Neah Bay, Washington; the end of the world, and I was there for two years . . .

**Q:** At least from Queens, yeah. (Laughter)

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** . . . and then I came down here, so.

**Q:** What kind of things do you do to train up for . . . well the things that you do to train up to be a boarding team member, were they different for this mission? Do you have to go through the . . . here I'm thinking about things like how many times they stick you in the arm?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Oh, with a . . . stick you in the arm with . . . ?

**Q:** For vaccinations and all that.

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Oh yeah, we definitely got a lot of vaccines in us before we came, you know, and we do a certain training that .. our training team down at TACSOUTH; they set up this training schedule for us and it's amazing. It's something that you just . . . you

know, you're like, you do it and you're like, whoa, I can't believe we actually just, you know, this is great stuff that I never thought I'd get to do. And they really do help you out, and just all their training staff there. So coming over here to the Middle . . .

**Q:** What are some of the kind of things you'd do?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** We do a lot of . . . we have mock boardings that we do. Down in Miami they have some boats that we'd be doing, you know, some tugs down in the river that we do mock boardings on. We use paintball guns and stuff like that for simulation. We also have platforms on land that we work with. They'd use a lot of noise simulation and stuff like that, and it is very intense, very hardcore training for a long time, and you just get it done, and we do that. We train every day when we're in port. I mean we just train and train and train.

**Q:** Do you get a lot of policy to go along with your training; like why you're doing certain things?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Oh definitely. The Coast Guard policy is always in effect. We always go with Coast Guard policy.

**Q:** And "Use of Force" and all that?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Force Continuum, Use of Force Policy, and that's just our job and we have to live by it.

**Q:** Had you been on a number of boarding missions in the Caribbean before you came here?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I did one deployment for 70 days. We had a four-ton cocaine bust down there. It was my first patrol with the TACLET so I was pretty psyched about that. It gets you built up. You know you're like, I'm finally doing something that's, you know, going from a housing DC to doing something like that where it's like you're stopping drugs from coming into the country. It's just a great feeling and now I'm coming out here and doing this. It's like I'm on a high horse right now.

**Q:** When did you get here?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I got here the end of Feb-

ruary.

**Q:** And can you describe sort of the run-up to that first night of the war; your experiences on different vessels, different . . . was this the first time you had to interact with people from other navies in the coalition?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** For me it was. We worked with the New Zealand Navy. We did some boardings down here at the pier; some mock boardings with them, just running through with their boarding teams showing them what we do. We don't try to change their policy or anything. We just show them what we do and see if we can help them in any way.

**Q:** Was there anything that they did that was that much different from what you guys are doing?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** It's all basically the same. It seems like all the navies that we've worked with, everybody has the basic same rules of engagement and use of force policies and stuff. It's really cool to interact with another navy to see what they do. Also though, we went and worked with the Polish Special Forces and they're great guys. I learned a lot from them. They have the same "Use of Force" as us. They do the same job as we do.

**Q:** Did you do any combined boardings with them?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** We did. We did some UN [United Nations] boardings with them down in the holding area; pretty compliant boardings. Just basics; checking the holds. We did a few - I can't recall how many we did - but we did a few boardings with them. We were on there for about a week doing boardings with them.

**Q:** As tensions got a little bit higher and the war started to get closer, can you describe that night that the war started; where you were and what you were doing?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** We were, I believe at the mouth of KAA [Kwahr 'Abd Allah] River. We were tasked to do a boarding on a tug that was allegedly broke down in the mid-



dle of the river, and we went onboard and just . . . I stood security with the crew and we did make sure that the . . .

**Q:** When you say, stood security, you were actually keeping them in place?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Just keeping them in place, keeping an eye on them, and they were really compliant, pretty scared.

**Q:** How about you?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I get "amped up" when I'm put into something like that. It's just my nature. I mean don't get me wrong. Your nerves are always there just like you do anything. I mean if you're not scared or if you're not nervous about doing something then there's probably something wrong with you. You know you've probably been in the job too long.

**Q:** Or not long enough.

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Or not long enough, exactly. So we just did that boarding, made sure that what they were saying that their engines were totally dissembled, and they were, and we went ahead and got off that vessel.

**Q:** And that was the night the war started?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** That was the night, I believe, yes.

**Q:** Could you see it and feel it, hear it, from where you were?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Yes.

**Q:** Yeah. What was it like being in the middle of a naval bombardment?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** It's pretty . . . for a person like me who's never really seen anything like that before, it was pretty interesting. I mean the sounds of war, and the colors of war you could say is how the . . . the color of the sky. I remember the sky was a big factor. You could see . . . it was very hazy from the smoke and very loud. Our ship; we were on the PC-10 [*USS Firebolt*]. It's the *Firebolt*; a naval ship, and it would shake every once in a while from some of the sounds; some of the noises that were coming off. So we were pretty close. It was . . . it gets to you. You know you're thinking of, hey yeah, we're doing this. I agree with what we're doing and I stick by my country

totally, but at the same time you've got to think of where the end of that noise is coming from. But you just do your job and you just make sure everything . . . your crew and your team is safe, and stuff like that.

**Q:** Did you have any sensation that these things were coming from behind you, over your heads, or . . . ?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Not really. Like I said, that night was real dark. You couldn't really see much except for the haze in the sky. So you would see flashes but you really couldn't tell where they were coming from, but we knew.

**Q:** Can you describe what you guys did the next day when you encountered these tugs?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Like I said, I'm just a boarding team member, so they told me to get dressed along with the other seven team members on our team. They said, get dressed. We have a boarding to do. We went ahead and saddled up. We went out, did this boarding on the tug with a barge next to it. We tied up next to the alongside tow and went onboard, mustered the crew - again I stood security back aft with the crew - and then the Australian Marines were there and we had a couple of Navy EOD [Explosive Ordnance Detachment] guys there. They went and took a look at the mines and stuff like that. I wasn't really involved with much of that because I was making sure that . . . the security; made sure nobody was, you know, the demeanor of the crew. You've got to look to see, you know, hey, are they acting funny or whatever? But you're always looking for something like that, and the crew was pretty nervous.

**Q:** Do you think they felt in fear of their lives?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I don't think I can say whether or not they did. The demeanor of them; they just seemed like they were pretty nervous; whether they got caught or they'd known they got caught, or whatever. They were pretty nervous sitting there. They wouldn't talk much. They wouldn't talk with

each other.

**Q:** They didn't try to talk with you guys at all?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** The only thing they'd ask us for is water and if they could use the bathroom. We would take them to the bathroom if they needed to go and stuff like that.

**Q:** They were taken EPW?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I believe so. I'm not sure.

**Q:** But they passed out of your control?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** They passed out of our control and went onto a different ship. They took them . . . I'm not sure where they took them to or what they did with them after that.

**Q:** And after that what sort of things was your team doing?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** We did another quick sweep of the vessel to make sure that it wasn't sinking; just to make sure it was intact. We made sure . . . we found another automatic weapon that hadn't been found before. We were down on the barge. We had all the weapons lined up on the barge and everything like that, and it was pretty scary standing on top of 60-something mines, you know, like uggghhh, let's get off this thing. (Laughter)

**Q:** You like to have EOD guys when . . .

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Exactly. It was great having them there. You know, it's like, hey, we trust you guys.

**Q:** Yeah, and after that day, as the war progressed, what do you recall now as significant operational highlights of what the unit did? Did you continue your boardings off the *Firebolt*?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Well until we came back into port.

**Q:** Okay, which is now?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Which was now, yes. We did a lot of escort duties back and forth from Umm Qasr. We actually pulled into Umm Qasr.

**Q:** Did you go ashore there?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I just stepped ashore and then went back to the conn [the ship's bridge area]; just pretty cool.

**Q:** What was Umm Qasr like when you

stepped ashore there?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** It was sandy; pretty deserted; a lot of Marines; a lot of coalition forces were there but you could tell it was deserted. Pretty eerie, and that was when we escorted one of the . . . the first humanitarian ships.

**Q:** Do you remember what vessel that was you escorted?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I can't recall off the top of my head.

**Q:** What do you take from this that you'll take with you for the rest of your career in the Coast Guard and your civilian career?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** I think, work-wise, my career-wise I take the tactics that we used; the communications with other coalition forces, how it really was. I mean there were times when there was a language barrier. I mean when we were with the Polish . . .

**Q:** Almost like the NYPD [New York Police Department]. (Laughter)

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Exactly. You know it's like you really couldn't communicate with them because they don't speak English and we don't speak Polish. So you use a lot of hand signals and a lot of stuff like that, and it seemed that it worked out perfectly.

I mean nothing's perfect I know, but still it seemed to be rolling. Even when we would be training with the Aussies [Australians] or the New Zealand folks, I mean the accents still . . . I mean like, you know, I don't have much of an accent but we have guys on our team that have accents and they have really thick accents, so it's like you have to learn how to slow down and stuff like that.

**Q:** Can you tell the difference between a New Zealander and an Aussie?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Not really.

**Q:** Not really. (Laughter)

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** So I think I take that for work-wise just that things work. You know the training that we get, the training that we do is - as tedious as it sometimes is - it works. I mean there's always something there. And

for my personal life; just the way it felt that first day of war, just that you're feeling that, okay, yeah, this is getting done and this is getting done for a reason.

**Q:** Are you glad it's over?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Well it's not over yet, but . . . Well not even until I get home. I mean I still have family over here.

**Q:** Do you?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** So I mean there are still things that just need to get done. So until this whole thing is over with, there's still going to be that feeling; something to tell my kids.

**Q:** Is there anything that you'd like to add or anything we haven't covered that you wanted me to comment on or add?

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Not really. I think we've pretty much covered everything.

**Q:** Well DC3, I really appreciate this.

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** Alright Chief.

**Q:** Thanks for hanging around and . . .

**DC3 Bruckenthal:** No problem.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

The following is excerpted from a Veterans Day article by PA1 Donnie Brzuska, PADET Jacksonville.

Bruckenthal had volunteered to serve with Law Enforcement Detachment 403 from Tactical Law Enforcement Team South on his second tour for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bruckenthal and six other coalition sailors attached to the *USS Firebolt* were preparing to board a suspicious dhow, or small boat, attempting to infiltrate the security zone around the Iraqi pumping station.

The dhow exploded sending the boarding party and Navy boat crew into the water. Bruckenthal was incapacitated by the injuries sustained during the massive explosion. His friend, shipmate and fellow Coast Guardsman, Petty Officer 3rd Class Joseph T. Ruggiero, who was also injured in the attack, inflated Bruckenthal's lifejacket in attempt to save his life. Sadly, Bruckenthal was later pronounced dead. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Global War on

Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

“Nathan Bruckenthal was an outstanding Coast Guardsman who exemplified our core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty,” said Admiral Collins, Coast Guard Commandant, the day of Bruckenthal’s burial in Arlington Cemetery, Va. “His life, so accomplished and full of promise, was cut short defending our nation, his fellow service members and the Iraqi people. We shall not forget his sacrifice “, He is the first Coast Guardsman killed in action since the Vietnam War.

**“Nathan Bruckenthal was an outstanding Coast Guardsman who exemplified our core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty,”**

**Bruckenthal Hall** at Coast Guard Station Montauk, NY, is named after DC3 Nathan Bruckenthal who died on April 24, 2004

His daughter, **Harper Natalie Bruckenthal** was born November 19, 2004.

## LATEST PROJECTS

Thank you for all your donations and contributions. Because of your support, The Foundation has been able to undertake several new projects. Here are just a few.

**Grand Haven, Michigan:** . During WWII the USCGC Escanaba, homeported in Grand Haven, was sent to the Atlantic where it was torpedoed leaving only two survivors. The families of the crew still lived in Grand Haven. For 84 years, Grand Haven has celebrated Coast Guard Day, August 4 beginning as a community picnic. This year they are expanding their celebration and will place the first of many bronze plaques in the sidewalks, to become a “Walk of History” similar to the Hollywood “Walk of Fame”. Each plaque would commemorate an event in Coast Guard History. The Foundation has been and will continue to be a consultant in this effort. The Coast Guard Festival Committee is funding the first 2 plaques commemorating the creation of the Revenue Cutter Service and the official designation of Grand Haven as “Coast Guard City U.S.A.” The Executive Director and members of the Board of Regents will participate in this event. Additional information can be obtained at [www.ghcgfest.org](http://www.ghcgfest.org).

**Video History—YNCM Phil F. Smith** The Foundation has completed filming, editing, reproducing and distributing the life story of Phil Smith who was the second Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard. He tells of the difficulty of becoming an accepted part of the system. MCPOCG was a new beast and no one knew how to tame it, handle it or use it, a far cry from the total acceptance of and recognition of the value of MCPOCG today. Phil was a key player in that transition. Your contributions have made this video possible.

### Coast Guard Memorial Plaza -Baltimore

The inner harbor in Baltimore is the home of *USCGC Taney* and temporary home of *USCGC Tamaroa*. In recognition of the local

efforts to make this a destination for visitors, your contributions have enabled The Foundation to contribute a brick in the plaza with our name and motto on the brick. Look for it next time you are in Baltimore. See [www.baltowaterfrontpromenade.org](http://www.baltowaterfrontpromenade.org).

**USCGC Mackinaw:** This icebreaker has been a mainstay of Great Lakes economics for over six decades. It is being retired and is being replaced by a new USCGC Mackinaw. The original will become a museum moored at Mackinaw City, Michigan. The Foundation provided a bronze plaque to honor all the past crews who have worked to keep the great Lakes shipping lanes open well into each winter. The Foundation is also designing and printing pamphlets describing the vessel so visitors will have accurate knowledge of the great history created by this vessel. A new book has been published: *USCGC MACKINAW, An illustrated History of the Great Lakes Queen*. By Mike Fornes. ISBN:1-599971-080-3. P.O. Box 305, Mackinaw City, MI 48701.

**Ancient Helicopters on the History Channel:** As most people know, the helicopter was developed by Igor Sikorski. One of the Coast Guard’s proponents of the future of helicopters was Commander Frank A Ericson. The other was Commander Stewart Graham. They were the original test pilots. Much of the testing took place at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, NY. At the time, Igor Sikorski’s son, Sergi was also stationed at Floyd Bennett. The three became acquainted and worked together. Fast forward 60 years to San Diego in March 2006. Now both in their 80’s, Stew Graham and Sergi Sikorski spent several days together filming their reminiscences and piloting helicopters. This notable event was made possible by some funding from The Foundation for Coast Guard History and the personal involvement of Tom Beard, author and retired helicopter pilot. Watch for it on the History Channel.

## **EDITORIAL: A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum.**

When writing the original draft of this editorial, I was full of vigor against the system. I also had been misinformed. My wrath was misdirected.

I had been informed that citations for heroism were “private” not public information. Of course my reaction was “The act was performed in the public interest, by a public employee, acting in an official capacity on publicly paid time. What is private about that? The public has a right to know. The public has a need to know.” Ranting and raving went on from there.

Wiser heads prevailed. Further investigation by the Chairman of our Board of Regents determined that the information I had received was grossly in error. Heroic citations are indeed public information. The problem is that there is no central repository where this information can be retrieved.

The solution to this problem is not difficult. Each time a citation is issued for Achievement or Commendation Medals with “O” device or any Medal above that, send a copy to the Office of the Coast Guard Historian along with any background reports, photos and newspaper articles. Will this work? Only if someone thinks it is important enough, exercises some oversight and follows through. With just a bit of attention, this can become routine. Thus our chroniclers and potential authors will have the raw material they need to tell our story.

Our next issue will contain dozens of citations related to hurricane Katrina. They won’t be the last

We have ignored too many heroes. We have lost too many stories, We have not seen our last hero.

Fred

## **PRESIDENT TYLER AND THE REVENUE CUTTERS.**

CAPT Charles B. Hathaway, USCG (Ret)

Most of us, if asked to name all forty three U.S. Presidents, would have to do a little deep thinking to come up with some of them; and John Tyler would very likely be one of the names with which we had trouble. Certainly not one of our country’s most famous presidents, he was nevertheless involved in a couple of “firsts”, and during his administration the Revenue Cutter Service went through some noteworthy, and sometimes bizarre, developments.

Tyler, a Virginian who had been that state’s Governor and a U.S. Senator, was the choice of the newly formed Whig Party to be William Henry Harrison’s running mate in the Presidential election of 1840. Running on the campaign slogan of “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too”, a reference to Harrison’s victory over the Shawnee Indians at Tippecanoe twenty years earlier, the Harrison-Tyler slate won easily. The Phrase “and Tyler Too” makes John Tyler sound like an afterthought, and that was quite likely the way most people thought of him but that was about to change.

Inauguration Day, March 4, 1841 was rainy and cold, and the popular Harrison stood, without a hat, on the Capitol steps to deliver a long inaugural address. He contracted a cold which soon turned to pneumonia and exactly one month later, on April 4, he died. So in accordance with Article II of the Constitution, Tyler became President.

Since then there have been eight other Vice Presidents move up to the top position as the result of the death or resignation of the President: both Johnsons, Fillmore, Arthur, Theodore Roosevelt, Coolidge, Truman and Ford. However, this was a first for the nation and neither Congress nor the public were quite

sure what to make of it—was he just the “acting President” or what? Tyler quickly put an end to any thoughts that he was anything less than the President.

Initially he retained all of Harrison’s cabinet, which included Thomas Ewing as Secretary of the Treasury. However, after Tyler twice vetoed a bill to establish a second National Bank, the entire cabinet, with the exception of Secretary of State

**“increase in revenue and a decrease in government spending”**

Daniel Webster, resigned and the Whig Party expelled him from their ranks. He then appointed a new cabinet, mostly Democrats. Included in this new cabinet were John C. Spencer, a lawyer from New York State, as Secretary of War, Hugh S. Legare of South Carolina as Attorney General (a part time position in those days) and Walter C. Forward of Connecticut as Secretary of the Treasury.

Forward, who had been the Comptroller of the Treasury under Harrison, realized that the country’s finances were in rather poor shape; and he went to Congress predicting a \$14,000,000 debt by the end of the year unless two things occurred “an increase in revenue and a decrease in government spending.” He persuaded Congress to pass a new tariff law greatly increasing the duties on imports. Tyler, who didn’t much like tariffs anyway, found enough that he didn’t like in the tariff bill and vetoed it. Then he vetoed a second one, and the House of Representatives tried unsuccessfully to impeach him. Finally, after Forward convinced him that the country was on the verge of going broke, he relented and signed a third one.

Walter Forward then turned his attention to the revenue cutters, blasting them for spending too much time in port. With higher tariffs, he reasoned, there was that much more incentive for smugglers and therefore more reason for the

cutters to be out there enforcing the law. This would bring in revenue, but he also went after the cutters to cut expense. He went into great detail on such things that stoves for heating would be provided only for cutters based north of Charleston. He also issued a copy of the laws of the United States to each cutter so “that the officers and others employed in the service may be fully informed in respect to their official obligations”. This was accompanied by detailed instructions on the duties of various members of the crew, rates of pay and other details.

Pay for the crews was set at \$15 a month for able seamen and \$6 to \$10 a month for boys, with the provision that, if Customs Collectors found it impossible to sign on a crew at those rates, they were authorized to match local merchant seamen pay rates. He also provided that three qualified seamen could be selected to serve as petty officers: a boatswain’s mate, a gunner’s mate and a carpenter’s mate, with an additional \$3 per month pay. These petty officers were to serve as such at the discretion of their commanding officers. Duties of the Captain, Senior Lieutenant, Boatswain, Gunner and Carpenter were also described in detail.

While Forward was trying to get these things straightened out, Congress was trying, for the first of many times, to do away with the revenue cutters and turn their duties over to the Navy. Despite whatever reservations Forward may have had concerning the performance of the cutter crews, he was quick to come to their defense and squelch this idea.

During the previous administration of Martin VanBuren, Secretary Levi Woodbury had broached the idea of building some steam powered cutters but the idea had been abandoned when Congress decided that \$35,000 was too much to spend for a Revenue Cutter. Forward brought the idea to the fore again and although there is a little confusion over who

actually authorized what when, the process of building the first two iron hulled, steam powered cutters was started before Forward left office in 1843 to resume private law practice in Pittsburgh.

To replace Forward at Treasury, president Tyler moved John Spencer from his previous position as Secretary of War, where he had earned the president's praise for the diligence and quality of his work. Spencer was equally effective as Secretary of the Treasury, one political reporter commenting that he administered the affairs of the department, "with an ability, assiduity, integrity and faithfulness seldom equaled since the days of Hamilton".

**Spencer established, within the Treasury Department, a Revenue Marine Bureau**

Although Walter Forward had outlined the duties of the various ranks and rates on the cutters, John Spencer saw some problems with the proficiency of the Revenue Cutter officer corps, the reforms instituted by Secretary Louis McLane some twelve years earlier not having been continued. But Spencer realized that he had neither the time nor the expertise to tackle this or other problems with the cutter service without some competent help. Up to that time the cutters had been under the overall supervision of the Secretary himself through whichever of his assistants or auditors he chose to assign this responsibility and the day-to-day operation of the cutters was under the direction of the local Collectors of Customs. In other words the Revenue Cutter Service was not really an organization.

Spencer established, within the Treasury Department, a Revenue Marine Bureau and he brought a cutter captain, Alexander Fraser, ashore to head it up. Together they accomplished a lot, some of it good and some of it things which they would probably just as soon forget. And there has always been a question as to just which one of them should really get

the credit for what was done. Kensil Bell's book *Always Ready* has a chapter entitled *The Honorable John C. Spencer Gets Things Shipshape*; while Irving H. King, in his book *The Coast Guard Under Sail*, has a chapter entitled *The Reforms of Alexander Fraser*. It's probably a case of a good man working under a boss who had the good sense to encourage him.

They first tackled the officer qualification situation, requiring that all new officers start as Third Lieutenants, and instituting a promotion system similar to that of the Navy. The petty officer ratings established by his predecessor Walter Forward were no longer to be at the pleasure of the cutter captains, but the men were to be issued warrants by the Secretary.

With a seagoing officer in charge, Spencer was able to report to Congress that the Department "now knows what is done and what is neglected; what expenses are incurred, with the reasons for them."

But possibly the biggest challenge facing Spencer and Fraser was the question of the new iron hulled steam powered cutters. Although the first two had apparently been authorized by Secretary Forward, it is likely that

**Pearson H. Bonham, who is therefore considered to be the service's first engineering officer.**

actual construction did not commence until Spencer's time. The first two cutters were named *Spencer* and *Legare*, for the

Secretary and the Attorney General, who may have played some part in getting the appropriations and contracts in order. These steam cutters were to be 160 feet long and also rigged for sail—as three masted barkentines.

With the Revenue Marine's first steam cutters came the requirement for the service's first engineers. The first appointment as Chief Engineer was offered to one Alexander Burbach

but in what may have been the smartest thing he ever did, Burbach turned it down. The next appointment was extended to, and accepted by, Pearson H. Bonham, who is therefore considered to be the service's first engineering officer. Engineers evidently were not considered commissioned officers at that time, as Bonham's commission as a Chief Engineer was dated March 21, 1845, ten months after his original appointment.

Early steamships had used side paddle wheels for propulsion, but the Navy was understandably concerned that these were too vulnerable to enemy fire so they had been exploring alternative systems. The *Legare* was equipped with

twin Ericsson screw propellers, basically similar to the propellers with which we are all familiar today, but a new

***Legare's boilers were leaking 500 gallons an hour, Spemcer's wheels weren't lined up properly and her whole engineering plant seemed to be falling apart.***

development in the 1840's. The *Spencer* had a rig invented by a Navy Lieutenant William Hunter, which consisted of a paddle wheel mounted horizontally at the bottom of the hull. What Hunter had overlooked was the fact that some of the blades would be working in opposition to the others. The Franklin Institute of Pennsylvania evaluated the Hunter's wheel and reported that, "A very few - three or four - of the outside paddles are thus rendered efficient in the propulsion of the vessel, while all the force required to move the others through the water is wasted."

*Legare*, commissioned in 1844, experienced many failures, and the Ericsson screws were replaced by another propeller designed by Richard Loper, but the machinery to drive these was complicated and hard to maintain. Assigned to duty in the Gulf of Mexico during the Mexican War, she lasted only two months on scene before returning to Norfolk. *Spencer* also commissioned in 1844, had the Hunter

Wheel and when this proved to be unsatisfactory, it was replaced by the Loper propeller.

Two other things happened in 1844. John Spencer, despite his apparently fine performance as Treasury Secretary, found himself in a serious difference of opinion with President Tyler and was replaced by George M. Bibb. Shortly after assuming his new position, Bibb received Captain Fraser's annual report on the state of the Revenue Marine, including a very critical assessment of the new steam cutters. *Legare's* boilers were leaking 500 gallons an hour, *Spemcer's* wheels weren't lined up properly and her whole engineering plant seemed to be falling apart. Also the placement of the machinery in these ships made them very hard to manage under sail. There were four more steam cutters under construction, three of which were scheduled to get Hunter's wheel and Captain Fraser's opinion was that they weren't likely to be any better than the first two.

This gloomy prognosis also reached the Halls of Congress and it wasn't long before a bill was passed requiring that, except for those already under construction, no more cutters were to be built without specific appropriation by Congress. President Tyler vetoed the bill, the veto message mentioning that, in addition to the four under construction, contracts had been signed for two more. Bibb and Tyler pointed out that the contractors were already procuring materials and cancelling these two would violate the sanctity of an agreement already entered into by the government.

On March 3, 1845, the last day of President Tyler's administration, both houses of Congress took up that bill. The Senate passed the bill over the President's veto by a vote of 41 to 1. The House concurred and the act became law. This was the first time in the fifty-six year history of the United States that Congress had overridden a presidential veto. Despite that override, all eight of the planned *Legare*



class steam cutters were eventually built and all were, in the words of cutter historian Donald Canney, “unmitigated failures”. One of these, the *Bibb*, which had to be beached on its sea trials to keep it from sinking, had originally been named *Tyler*. Did the President decide that he didn’t want his name on such poor craft and pass the questionable honor down to his Treasury Secretary?

The names of Forward, Legare and Spencer are presently found on three of the Coast Guard’s 270 foot cutters and those three plus *Bibb*, *Bonham* and *Ewing* have had their names on earlier cutters. However the man who was in the middle of all these personnel reforms and ship construction problems, Alexander Fraser, has never been so recognized.

*Editor’s Observations:*

*The foregoing is an example of truly outstanding research by Captain Charles Hathaway, USCG (Ret). It is based on his book USCGC Eponyms.*

*This is a description of two notable firsts in the history of our government: the first time a Vice President acceded to the presidency to replace the elected President, and the first override of a presidential veto.*

*More to the point of Coast Guard history, this essay definitely resolves the long-standing confusion between the Revenue Cutter Service and the Revenue Marine. The Revenue Cutter Service was the operating arm, the Revenue Marine Bureau was the administrative arm created in the early 1840’s. Later in that century the two names became interchangeable and eventually the term Revenue Marine became more prevalent, although when the U.S. Coast Guard was established in 1915 it was the result of joining the Revenue Cutter Service and the Lifesaving Service.*

*Further observation: Apparently when the Secretary of the Treasury needed new cutters, he just went out and ordered them. Those were the good old days.*

## **THE NATIONAL COAST GUARD MUSEUM TO BE BUILT IN NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT**

More than seven years spent courting the National Coast Guard Museum will pay off for the city as a portion of the Fort Trumbull peninsula is formally announced as the future location of the museum.

Governor M. Jodi Rell and U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, joined city and state officials and representatives of the New London Development Corp., U.S. Coast Guard, National Coast Guard Museum Association and developers Corcoran Jennison at Fort Trumbull State Park to designate the 2.7 acres as the museum site. The governor committed \$15 million in state funds toward the museum, which is estimated to cost more than \$50 million.

The designation of a Fort Trumbull museum site comes as little surprise but marks a major step toward construction of the museum, which was suggested for Fort Trumbull in August 1998 by the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Redevelopment Authority.

Simmons and U.S. Sens. Christopher J. Dodd and Joseph I. Lieberman, both Connecticut Democrats, successfully pushed for federal legislation passed in July 2004 requiring the Coast Guard to locate the museum in New London. Until now the project has lacked formal commitments from the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Coast Guard Museum Association to bring the museum to the city — commitments necessary before environmental tests, building designs and, ultimately, construction can be undertaken.

*Story derived from articles in the New London Day.*

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE U.S. REVENUE CUTTER *MIAMI*

In a little known event of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln actually planned, directed, participated in and implemented what might have been a major battle. In early 1862, many people including the President were becoming frustrated with General McClellan's failure to actively pursue the war. McClellan and his immense army arrived at Fort Monroe at Hampton Roads at the mouth of the James River on 4 April, 1862. Claiming he faced a much larger force than actually existed, in early May he finally advanced on Yorktown to find no resistance whatever. He still refused to advance on Richmond.

On 5 May, Lincoln boarded the *USRC Miami* and headed for Fort Monroe, across the river from Norfolk, a very strategic position, which McClellan had also neglected. Lincoln went ashore into enemy territory and selected the best landing point for an attack on Norfolk. The attack with a minimal force began on May 9, 1862 only to find no resistance. Lincoln proved again to McClellan that fortitude overcame caution. *The Revenue Cutter Miami* had served a noble purpose.

This story has been derived from *Team of Rivals, The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin pg 436ff.

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**CORRECTION** In our most recent issue, in the lead article about Edwin Emery, the author advises me that I spelled the name of Edwin Emery three different ways. My deepest apologies to the author, Captain R. C. Ayer, and to the very tolerant and understanding family of Edwin Emery.

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### MACKINAW'S LAST TRIP

The Story in the next column was extracted from an article by Danielle Quisenberry of the *Times Herald*

Thousands visit Mackinaw on last stop of farewell tour. Larry Sobczak was so impressed with the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Mackinaw, he made a second trip to see the vessel. Sobczak, 49, of Berkley, an occasional Port Huron visitor, was snapping pictures aboard the Mackinaw's wide deck, as it sat at the Sarnia Government Dock for tours Saturday afternoon. He also visited the ship when it docked in Toledo on April 15.

"It's a once, or twice, in a lifetime opportunity," he said. The 290-foot icebreaker, in service since 1944, made its final stop on its farewell tour in Sarnia, the hub of Great Lakes ice-breaking activity. It left Saturday evening for its homeport in Cheboygan.

**"This is not an old ship's funeral"**

The Mackinaw was decommissioned June 9, 2006. Pending US congressional approval, it will then become a floating museum in Mackinaw City. Its crew of more than 70 will be dispersed on other assignments.

Long lines of people clamored to get aboard the Mackinaw as members of the Royal Canadian Legion played bagpipes.

"It is more than a ceremonial bond," Capt. Joe McGuinness said to loud applause. "Our bonds were built not on sunny days like today. They are built together at 3 a.m. in a gale ... In April or May breaking ice in the St. Clair River."

The U.S. and Canadian coast guards depend on each other - neither of them have enough icebreakers of their own to keep the Great Lakes shipping channels open every winter, McGuinness said. He stressed this wasn't "an old ship's funeral."

## **MONSTER WAVES**

On the dark and stormy night of 8 February 2000, you wouldn't want to have been on board the *Discovery* a British oceanographic research ship.

Out in the North Atlantic, 250km west of Scotland and close to the tiny island of Rockall, the ship was forced to sit through what researchers think are the biggest waves ever directly recorded in the open ocean. The two largest measured just over 29 metres from peak to trough—about the height of a ten storey building.

The tempest, which hit its peak close to midnight was terrifying for the scientists on board. “It was pretty horrendous,” says oceanographer Naomi Holliday of the University of Southampton in England, who was on the *Discovery*. “Nobody got any sleep, we were literally thrown out of our bunks.” The ordeal may have important scientific payoff in showing that such extreme ocean conditions could be more common in this area than previously recognized, say Holliday and colleagues in a paper in *Geophysical Research Letters*

*This public service announcement is brought to you so that you can now continue with your sea stories of monstrous waves. Some of those stories may actually be true.*