



"In Tow"

Newsletter of the Coast Guard Tug Association

Volume 2, Number 2

"SEMPER PARATUS"



www.cg-tugs.org

Summer 2009

CGTA Reunion 2008 - Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, NJ

Coast Guard Tug Association Officers

President

C.A. (Sandy) Schwaab

Vice President

George Staples

Secretary

Skip Tyler

Treasurer

Douglas O'Dell

Historian

Jim T. Flynn

Webmaster

Douglas O'Dell

"IN TOW" Editor

C.A. (Sandy) Schwaab

"IN TOW" Publisher

Douglas O'Dell

Website: <http://www.cg-tugs.org>

"In Tow" Newsletter

Newsletter of the CG Tug Association. Published as an E-Newsletter and distributed online as an Adobe PDF. If you would like to write for In Tow, please contact us through the CGTA website

Copyright © 2007, 2009, CG Tug Association
All Rights Reserved



Atlas Inn, Cape May, NJ.



Graduation of Company Gulf-180



Apalachee at Oswego 23 May 2009

Reunion Four of the Coast Guard Tug Association was a tremendous success and perhaps the best ever and then we took the APALACHEE through the Welland Canal and all the way to Cleveland, OH,

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Reunion 2008 -- highlights of our fun filled Cape May Sea Shore celebration. Your Historian's Report **p. 2**

Voyage of the Apalachee or how we found a new way to be young again on an old Tug **p. 6**

Reunion 4, 2008

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

Dates: Thursday, 2 October – Saturday, 4 October 2008

Location: Atlas Inn, Cape May, NJ and USCG Training Center, Cape May

Hospitality suite/meeting room, a block of 25 rooms, dinner, and complimentary breakfasts were provided at the Atlas. Additionally, the hotel had an in-house restaurant, a full bar, and pool, with seaside views and walking distance to the beach. The Atlas is also within walking distance of several additional restaurants, and local shopping and attractions. **Everything was just as Advertised!**



Left above: The beach was lovely and the weather couldn't have been better all weekend long!



Right above: CGTA Officers and members of the CGC CAPSTAN crew gather on the deck outside of the Hospitality Suite on Thursday.



Ida Lewis Auditorium



Medal of Honor Winner Douglas A. Munro Memorial

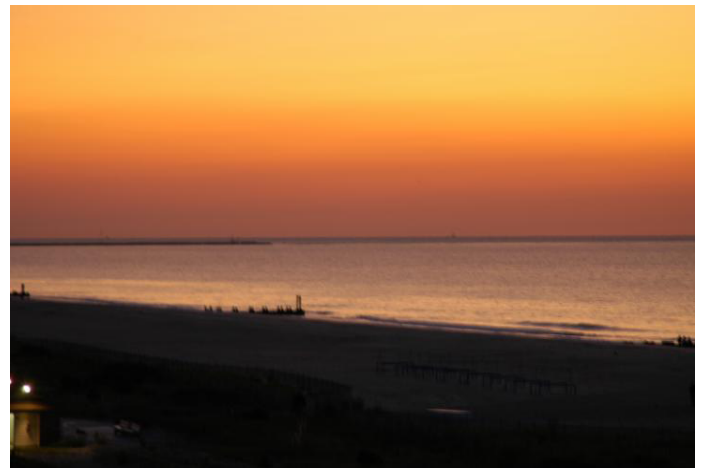
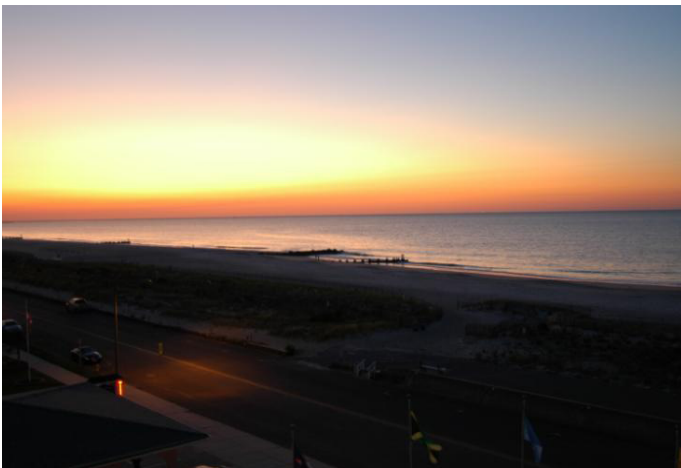
Everything went off like clockwork and after lunch it was time for touring the base and the waterfront. We saw everything from the buildings and Memorials to 25-foot Small Response Boats and the 210-foot CGC *Vigorous*.



Our friends on the CGC Capstan gave us a warm welcome and a tour of CGC Vigorous followed.



Presentations by Doug O'Dell to BMC Ben Huber of the Capstan and by Sandy Schwaab to George Staples of CGTA



Sunrise in Cape May is Beautiful!



We boarded the bus and head for Rio Grande the home of NAS Wildwood and the Viet Nam Veterans Museum.



And then it was time for Lunch before

we proceeded to:



Our Final stop take us to the Cape May Lighthouse, and then back to:



The Raffle & auction in Hospitality Suite. -- We made it back just in time to enjoy the fun!

A Final Word from Your Historian

My love of Ships and the Sea has spanned most of life. Never a seagoing sailor I've always admired my ships and studied them at arms length. My connections have only begun to get more "personalized" in the last 10 to 15 years. With a small group of like-minded Ship Lovers I have helped to found the Naval History and Research Associates (NHARA). As a member of the International Naval Research Organization (INRO) my wife Diane and I have traveled and cruised the Western Hemisphere and Europe. All of these trips have included Ships and sometimes have been exclusively "Ships Trips." What a delight it has been to see so much and go so far.

When Sandy invited me to the 3rd CGTA reunion in 2006 I hesitated, but thought, what the heck, I'll be in CT and can see my Mom and meet some new people and even get some good Ship Photos for my collection. It was held in Mystic and New London Connecticut which is familiar territory for me. Bob Mitchell, my step-father, finished his CG career as a CHGUN2 at the CG Academy in the 1970's. As I drove into the Hotel back then it was with a sense of excitement mixed with apprehension. I was a stranger to all of you, as you were to me. What did I really know of the CG Tug Association? While I had sent Doug quite a few photos I still felt like an outsider -- an interloper. What's this Navy guy, and an ex. Corpsman at that, doing with a bunch of hard working brown water Coast Guard Tug Sailors? I felt I should earn my way as part of the group -- to be accepted and to belong. So, I did my best to prepare an interesting and comprehensive little History of Coast Guard Tugs to share with you all. Doug and Sandy seemed to like it and I felt good about that. I gave them a CD with all of the digital CG Tug photos that were in my collection at the time. Doug posted the History on the Association Web Site. I was pleased and flattered and confident that I have done a credible job.

At the Reunion progressed I handed out the full color History which I had printed up at home. We shook hands and I mingled. I saw the closeness of members as they arrived exchanged greetings. Together again or only for the first time. Sharing common experiences and growing closer through this new gathering of the clan. I seemed to fit in although I split my time between the reunion and attending to my Mom over in Deep River, CT. I met a number of you there and bonded with a few with whom I have kept in touch mostly via E-mail over the last two years. We have exchanged photos and gotten to know one another better as time has passed. It was a Good Decision to attend Reunion 3!

Last year in Cape May was a little different. Diane, the wonderful lady who I have walked through life with for more than 40 years, was with me. Sniffles and all she was determined to have a good time. She's not what you would call a "joiner." Makes friends slowly and with caution. Not bashful but no Party Animal is she. This was for her a little of what 2006 had been for me -- a tentative time of discovery and of getting acquainted. And she met some great ladies and had a fine time -- Casino Trip or no.

Thanks to you all for making us feel so welcome and letting us know that we can be a part of such a wonderful group of folks with a love of life and of those Black Hulled Beauties with the Furry Fenders and Rubber Buggy Bumpers, CG TUGS!

See You All in 2010 -- Jim Flynn, Philadelphia, PA, July 2009



This photo (L) proves that I was there - and then there is my favorite photo of the Reunion (R): Nick Rorro between CGTC CO and Cmd MCPO on the R.

Cruise of the *Apalachee* - by Jim Flynn

Dateline Oswego, New York, Wednesday May 23, 2009 - After literally days on end of preparation the big day we have all so looked forward to is finally here. The APPLE, as we sometimes refer to her, is as ready as we can make her to GET UNDERWAY. This reporter for one is experiencing an ever changing kaleidoscope of thoughts and emotions. It will be my first overnight voyage on anything smaller than a Cruise Ship. They have made me the cook by default and it will be the first time I have ever attempted to cook ANYTHING in the newly cleaned and polished Galley of the *Apalachee*. I pray too that no one will need serious medical attention. Only my camera inspires some confidence that I can fulfill at least one of my varied assignments on the trip as Historian and Photographer.

The intent of this part of "In Tow" is to document for the CGTA membership our day by day adventure as we transit Lake Ontario, the Welland Canal, and Lake Erie on the way to Whiskey Island on the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland. It remains to be seen whether this will be the great TOW TREK or the Voyage From Hades. Our weather forecast is a bit dicey as to precipitation and only the weather gods know what winds we may face. So, press on oh gentle reader as the adventure unfolds. The crew is chomping at the bit to get underway - engineers, start your engines!



Doug O'Dell atop the stack to clear the exhaust in Oswego on April 29, 2009.

The cleanup has been a monumental effort by all hands and lady volunteers as well. Not only is there 20+ years of accumulated dust and grime, but a good deal of the top layers of paint are peeling and the unprotected surfaces are rife with rust.

Saturday May 24 to Wednesday 27, 2009 -- Oswego, NY

Many of us spent time aboard in April for a preliminary week of "Field Day" activity. And now we are back just 5 days before our schedules sailing date. I arrive on Saturday the 24th and a few early birds like the Schwaabs and the Cunninghams have preceeded me. They are hard at work cleaning and I get to meet Dave and Cathy for the first time as they are scouring the galley. Dave remarks at how grimy the galley was when he first saw it. Not at all as he remembered it when he decommissioned the *Apalachee* in 1986 as her last CO. I thought to myself, "boy if you think it's grimy now you should have seen it before I spent most of 3 days, just a month ago, cleaning and de-greasing it." But they are doing a good job and I keep my mouth shut.



Shirley Schwaab and Cathy Cunningham. Our tireless, hard working help mates, who meant so much to



Le Médecin de Bateau et essentielle cuisiner - Chef Flynn

My place of duty on the trip will be the Galley most of the time and I will learn valuable lessons working there. One hand for the ship and one hand for yourself when the "Apple" does her Rock & Roll act. Stow the cooking gear or it will end up in places where you don't want it to be. Most lessons are learned the hard way -- trial and error!

Down in the berthing spaces later on with Dave, we both take note of the name tags on the bunks. They are the names of Dave's crew which decommissioned the *Apalachee* up in Maine in 1986. I'm fascinated as I listen to Dave as he tells me something about each one of the young men who slept here when they served under his command so many years ago. But as he says, to him, it seems just like it was only yesterday. The crew's accommodations are basic but passable and I put my bedding on a lower bunk in the two-high area where the petty officers slept back in 1986. This will be a big change for some of us who are used to more creature comforts than the "Apple" can provide. It will be more like a "camp-out" than a pleasure cruise.



The Crew's Berthing Space.

Most of us are staying at the Econo Lodge on East First Street as we did in April for the cleanup week. We won't move aboard until the last possible time before our departure on Wednesday. This Saturday the rooms aren't ready yet so my son Jim - nickname "Pooch" and I drop off my suitcase with Tom at the front desk and head back to the "Apple."



C. A. (Sandy) Schwaab, CWO (ENG), Ret. CGC Ojibwa, James Flynn, HMC, USNR, Ret. - taken by Cathy Cunningham



*George Staples, BMC, Ret.
CGC Snohomish, 58-61, OinC, Erie Station, 71-75*



*Edward Anderson (SN, CGC Apalachee, 67-71)
Garry Domnise, LCDR, Ret. CGC Snohomish,
61-63*



Walt Randolph (ET3, USN, Marine Engineer) Robert Gesking, CWO (MAT), Ret.



Vinny Frititta (EM3, USCG, CGC Sauk)



Jeffrey Barnum, LT, USCG Current XO, CGC Neah Bay



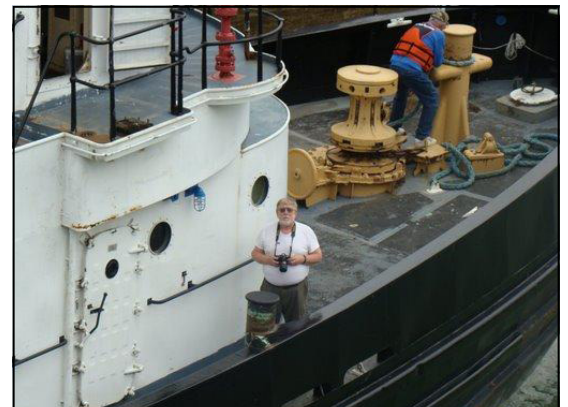
Above—George and Ed take a well earned break.

Left—David Cunningham, CWO (BOSN), Ret, (Last AD CO of Apalachee) Conning us through the Welland Canal



Left—Benjamin Reedy, SN, USCG Current CGC Neah Bay - In the Welland Canal

Right—Historian/ Photographer Flynn In the Welland Canal -- taken by Cathy Cunningham



Today We Sail - The Real Adventure Begins!

We're off and there has been an intermittent drizzle most of the morning. As we shift colors and the air horn blows the crowd on the pier waves a fond good-bye. And then as we clear the breakwater and see the Lighthouse we know we've really begun our adventure in earnest.



That night or more accurately at a little before 4 AM we have our first taste of real adventure when the Radar fails. And of course it comes at just about the most inopportune moment possible, since a fog has begun to roll in. My first hint of the situation is the sound of the fog horn blowing twice. I arise from my bunk since I'm due for the 4AM watch on the helm. But I'm saved by the horn and the first team is summoned to the bridge and I go start breakfast early. Soon I'm distracted by working and the others who are up early are soon smelling a wonderful aroma of bacon frying and fresh coffee brewing.



The WELLAND CANAL When the sun comes up the fog burns off and we make our way onward toward the entrance to the Welland Canal - Canadian Territory. We'll spend most of the day transiting the canal as we are raised some 300+ feet up to the level of Lake Erie from the lower level of Lake Ontario. There are eight sets of locks and we must wait our turn behind any commercial ships or others

which have priority. We wind up going through in the company of a beautiful white private yacht about 100-feet long and a bright red Canadian Coast Guard Patrol boat of about 60 feet in length.

They will be with us throughout our transit and we'll soon be tired of looking at them. At least I was after a few hours.



We make a stop while the big bulk carrier ahead of us goes through one of the set of locks. Who do we see on the shore? Cathy Cunningham who has been following us ever since we entered the canal system. She has taken photos and now when we tie up she becomes a line handler -- a remarkable lady is Mrs. Cunningham.



Cathy Cunningham -- Line Handler -- at a stop off in the

As we proceed through one set of locks after another it becomes almost routine to see the bridges raised to allow us to pass. Then too, from time to time we are greeted by crowds of spectators who wave cheerfully to us from convenient shore vantage points as we pass slowly from one series of locks to another on our way to Lake Erie.



By the time we reach the final set of locks the daylight is beginning to fade and the line handlers on deck are dead tired. Ed Anderson below, show signs of fatigue as we approach the final set of locks. He has been on deck for much of the day and has worked like a dray horse for most of that time. Hang in there Ed we'll soon be out of the Canal!



LAKE ERIE AT LAST— After spending the night tied up at the exit from the Canal we are off towards Erie, PA CG Station where George Staples was once the OIC. We have made it so far with no radar since our first night out of Oswego, and we have had only one other episode of excitement. This one when one of the air compressors shut down and as a result we lost control of the engine speed from the bridge since that control is operated by air pressure. So we instantly slowed from our brisk speed of about 7 knots down to an idle speed of about 2 knots. Our crack engineers had the back-up compressor up and running in just a few minutes and soon discovered that the outage was nothing serious. Little did we know that the real excitement was yet to come. Lake Erie holds a surprise for us. As calm as she looks in the photo below she can fool you!



But before our final adventure we head for CG Station Erie, PA and make a good land fall. After a bit of a struggle with on off shore wind we get tied up in Erie on Friday afternoon and breath a sigh of relief. We all look forward to badly needed showers, which we haven't had for the last two days. And we relish the other comfort facilities which are perhaps even

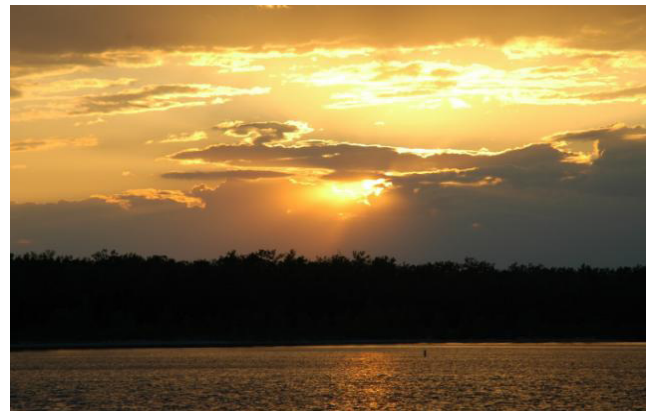
more welcome. It will be a pleasant night Friday and an even nicer Saturday in Erie. The folks there are friendly and accommodating and we really enjoy our stay. We receive a few visitors on board and some of our crew get an excursion on the 47-foot motor lifeboat which is stationed there. I regret that I must prepare for our steak BBQ and miss the boat ride.

CG Station Erie, PA



Last Part of the Journey to Cleveland

As the sun begins to set on Saturday we cast off for the final leg of our voyage. We have a feeling of calm and expectation and we leave Erie. It's been a good stop but we are all anxious to get on with it and to reach our destination.



The Coasties on the Erie 47-footer come out and escort us on our way. The sunset is beautiful to behold -- Red Sky at Night Sailor's Delight. Right? Little do we know it but we'll sing a different tune by morning. After a full day the watch is set and all those off duty hit the rack. I'm ready for some sack time myself and go off to sleep before 11 PM.

Again before 4 AM I am awakened (Yes, I know it's 0400 in military time but some non-military folks are hopefully reading this.) But this time Gary Domnisse wakes me for my trick at the helm. I can tell right away that we are rolling more than at any time before. I ask him, "are you serious?" Expecting that a land lubber like me with no experience will not be a good choice for helmsman during heavy weather. The "Apple" is rockin' and rollin' and as I get to the bridge I learn why. A storm from the west has moved in and the waves on shallow Lake Erie build up quickly and they keep on right on coming. I relieve Ben Reedy at the wheel and

Jeff Barnum relieves Gary as DWO. After a short time I begin to get the hang of things -- thank the Lord for Jeff.

About the time I think I may survive this trial, the weather seems to get worse and we are getting close to a lee shoal (or so it seems to me). We are tending to slide into the wave trough and need to make a course change to see if we can get the ship to ride better. We have taken some 30+ degree rolls and a 55-gallon drum and all the other gear that's not well secured including the lap top on the bridge (and I will learn later my pots and flat top grill in the Galley) all go flying. Jeff takes the helm and about that time Sandy comes on the bridge. They send me to wake Dave Cunningham and so ends my career as a helmsman.

By the time I see the mess in the galley and find a seat in the mess deck most everyone is up an about. I am dizzy but not really nauseous. A couple of old hands complain of sea sickness and the guys from the engine room tell of the big batteries that have shifted when we took the 35-degree roll that shifted everything. George, Ed and Ben have gone on deck on the 01 level and secured the run away drum and later will recover one of the life rings which has gotten caught in the flag staff on

its way overboard off the fan-tail.



I can barely stand up holding on with two hands and have continued vertigo to boot. Gary sends me out for some fresh air which helps, but I'm in no shape to do breakfast. So God love him Gary makes bacon and eggs for himself and for the other hearty



Sandy and Wally get ready for our last meal

souls who are hungry. I guess by now it is after 6 AM and things have calmed down a bit. We are several hours out of Cleveland and will proceed at about

5 knots from here on in.

I clean up the galley and get prepared for our last meal. A Baked Ham Sunday Dinner. It was to have featured several side dishes, but in the end I make Potato salad from the left over baked potatoes from Saturdays BBQ and get the Ham (which is pre cooked) well warmed through just in time for our welcoming committee from the CG Auxillary to meet us as we arrive off of the city. We are a bit early for our scheduled arrival. So we have time for everyone to eat before we man the side in our new APALACHEE CREW tee shirts.

Arrival at Cleveland



POSTSCRIPT

From the CGTA President:

APALACHEE UPDATE

Fellow Tuggers of the CGTA:

Stage Two of our plans to make the USCGC *Apalachee* (WYTM 71) into an operational, USCG museum ship and educational platform has taken place (acquisition, documentation, insurance, negotiations, cleaning & prepping being Stage One) – and a proud moment it is! Stage Three will include full restoration, cleaning & painting, repairing mechanical systems, and finding a permanent home for us on the Cleveland waterfront – several options are open to us.

Driven under her own power, with a crew of “vintage” and younger Coasties, we departed Oswego, NY on 27 May 09, up Lake Ontario, through the Welland Canal, and up bound to Cleveland, OH (with an overnight stop at Erie, PA Coast Guard Station), arriving at the USCG Moorings at 1500 on 31 May. A momentous voyage that all of us will never forget or have the opportunity to carry out again. Visit our web site at www.cg-tugs.org for photos & videos of the trip.

After several berth changes, we are currently tied up at the Cleveland Ship Repair Facility, a few miles up the Cuyahoga River, where we will receive shore power and commence our restoration process. A large cadre of volunteers has stepped forward to join us in cleaning, painting, mechanical systems repairs, and general “grunt work” to prepare her for display.

Our transit crew ranged in age from 71 to 24 – old salts and our future. As President, I would like to acknowledge those who participated in the cruise and those additional volunteers involved in the two, week-long preparation visits to Oswego.

Cruise:

BMC-Ret. George Staples (VP), SN (BM1-field promotion) Ed Anderson (Secy, Emeritus), HMC-Ret. (USN) Jim Flynn (Historian), CWO-Ret. Dave Cunningham, LCDR-Ret. Garry Domnise, LT Jeff Barnum (AD, CGC *Neah Bay*), CWO-Ret. Bob Gesking, EM3 Vinny Frititta, ET3 (USN) Wally Randolph, SN Ben Reedy (CGC *Neah Bay*), and CWO-Ret. Sandy Schwaab (Pres).

Support Crew:

SN Doug O’Dell (Tres), Tim O’Dell, Cathy Cunningham, Shirley Schwaab, and Helen Gesking.

Without their support, dedication, personal/financial sacrifice, and long, tedious hours, this project could not have come this far!! It is now up to you, our membership, to assist in whatever way you can to help us reach this long-term goal. To those that have already submitted this year’s annual dues and donations – THANK YOU. For those who have not stepped up, this is your opportunity – WE NEED YOUR FINANCIAL HELP! We need to keep the lights on, the ship warm, purchase supplies, pay bills, and keep the treasury growing. **Please help us make this dream come true!**

C. A. (Sandy) Schwaab, CWO3, USCG, Ret,
President, CGTA



TO:

RETURN IF UNDELIVERABLE