



# "In Tow"

Newsletter of the Coast Guard Tug Association



www.cg-tugs.org

Volume 2, Number 1

"SEMPER PARATUS"

Summer 2007

## The Loss of a Great Coastguardsman

By: Sandy Schwaab

We mourn the loss of our friend and Lighthouse visionary, CWO4 (BOSN) Kenneth N. Black, USCG, (Ret). Ken "crossed the bar" on 28 January 2007. I was privileged, along with BMC (Ret) George Staples, to be present at Ken's memorials and represent the Foundation for Coast Guard History and the Coast Guard Tug Foundation (Ken was our "Ancient Tugger"). The following ALCOAST (page 3) from COMDT, ADM Thad Allen, typifies Ken's contributions to the heritage of the U. S. Coast Guard and its history. At the last meeting of the Foundation's Board of Regents, none could recall, in our combined 100+ years of Coast Guard service, a COMDT ALCOAST in tribute to a CWO – this being generally reserved for deceased Flag officers; high praise for CWO Black. Ken was laid to rest in Union, ME with full military honors provided by Rockland area Coastguardsmen. Special thanks are in order for LT Tom Crane, CO of CGC THUNDER BAY, his XO, LTjg Kevin Sullivan, the men and women of Rockland-area units, and, particularly, CWO Paul Dilger, CO of CGC ABBIE BURGESS for their devotion to duty and to CWO Black. Fair winds and following seas, Shipmate.



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*The Coast Guard Tug Association would like to invite "You" our members, to contribute content for our newsletter. Sea stories, facts, photos, or any other harrowing tale you can cough up. Stories need to be based partly in fact. Please contact,*

*newsletter@cg-tugs.org*

*Thank you!*

### Where Are They Now?

"Traveling Inspectors" visit the CGC *Ojibwa*

By: Sandy Schwaab

Another WYTM is yet alive and well! In April 2006 (sorry for the LONG delay), your CG Tug Association "Traveling Inspectors" (Sandy Schwaab, George Staples, and Ed Anderson – along with our respective "XOs") made a

(Continued on page 4)



*In ice off Buffalo, 1972 (Photo by Dan Riksen)*

You know you're "Old Guard" if your ship had port-holes in the hull



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If you would like to write for In Tow, please contact us through the CGTA website

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## “From the Editor...”

Welcome back to the CGTA newsletter, the first (and long overdue) issue of 2007. Between the reunion in September, chasing the elusive, and now out of our hands, CGC *Yankton* through December, traveling, illnesses, and work, your dedicated staff is way behind the curve. We hope to make up for that from now on.

As the “Prez” points out and his article relates, the 2006 Reunion was a smashing success. We were blessed with good weather this time and the return of all the members from the 2005 reunion. We also welcomed several new participants. We hope our next encounter will bring additional numbers. Please note, we are still looking for an appropriate location for the 2008 reunion – and a “local representative” to spearhead the operation wherever that may be determined.

Immediately following the reunion (the day I got home!), we embarked on a fast and furious attempt to acquire the former CGC *Yankton* as a museum ship for the Association. Unfortunately, as best we tried, it was not to be. Fortunately, she was subsequently purchased by our associate member, Franz Von Reidel, and will be moved to the Great Lakes, refurbished, and returned to service. She will now join the ranks of her sisters *Ojibwa*, *Kaw*, *Snohomish*, *Arundel*, *Naugatuck*, *Apalachee* & *Modoc*, in the commercial fleet. Another one saved!!

Also, in December, due to circumstances beyond our control, we regret the resignation of our former Treasurer, Dave Vaughn. We wish him well in future endeavors, but now find ourselves lacking someone to fill that space. President, Doug O'Dell, has been filling the void in the interim. We are actively seeking a volunteer to fill the gap – any takers?

In May, BMC George Staples and I were fortunate to attend the 255-ft/Weather ship reunion in Reno, NV. Besides a good amount of gambling and carousing, we ran into several of our own “tuggers” and were able to recruit a number of new members. Welcome aboard!

Although we have been negligent in reporting our April 2006 visit to the former CGC *Ojibwa* in Savannah, GA (which is contained in this issue), we hope the next “port of call” of your “Traveling Inspectors” will be in September to the former-CGC *Apalachee* in Oswego, NY which will include a stop at the Northern New York CG reunion at Sackets Harbor, NY. We hope to run into many of our members there and influence any new members to join.

Semper Paratus,  
Sandy



“In Tow” Editor, Sandy Schwaab

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TO ALCOAST  
BT  
UNCLAS  
ALCOAST 057/07

SUBJ: DEATH OF A COAST GUARD LUMINARY

1. I AM SAD TO REPORT THE PASSING OF A COAST GUARD LUMINARY. CWO KENNETH BLACK (USCG RETIRED) DIED ON 28 JANUARY AT THE AGE OF 83.

2. CWO BLACK LED AN INSPIRED LIFE, BOTH IN THE COAST GUARD AND IN THE YEARS TO FOLLOW. BORN IN 1923, HE ENLISTED DURING WORLD WAR II AND SAW ACTION AT THE INVASION OF OKINAWA . AFTER THE WAR, HE SERVED THROUGHOUT NEW ENGLAND AND THE GREAT LAKES IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES, INCLUDING AS A COMMANDING OFFICER OF A LIGHTSHIP AND A CUTTER. HE CAPPED HIS 32 YEAR COAST GUARD CAREER AS THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF STATION ROCKLAND , MAINE .

3. MANY REMEMBER HIM FOR HIS EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOLLOWING HIS CAREER. LARGELY CREDITED AS A LEADER OF THE LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, HE FOUNDED THE MAINE LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM AND BECAME WIDELY KNOWN AS "MR. LIGHTHOUSE."

HIS INTEREST IN PRESERVATION BEGAN AS AN EFFORT TO SAVE HISTORICAL LIGHTHOUSE ARTIFACTS DURING THE MOVE TO AUTOMATION. HE STARTED WITH EXHIBITS AT COAST GUARD STATIONS, AND THEN AFTER RETIREMENT, HE SPENT YEARS TRAVELING AROUND NEW ENGLAND TO SEARCH FOR PIECES.

AS THE WORD SPREAD, OTHERS STEPPED FORWARD TO DONATE MORE ARTIFACTS. THESE INCLUDED ITEMS OF ALL TYPES AND SIZES, EVERYTHING FROM PRICELESS LENSES TO FOG SIGNALING DEVICES, SOME OF THESE WEIGHING THOUSANDS OF POUNDS.

4. TWO YEARS AGO, WITH THE HELP OF COMMUNITY LEADERS, HIS COLLECTION WAS MOVED INTO THE MAINE LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM , ESTABLISHED ON THE ROCKLAND WATERFRONT. JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD BE CONSOLIDATED WITH THE COLLECTION OF THE AMERICAN LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION'S MUSEUM OF LIGHTHOUSE HISTORY. THE MERGER WILL BECOME THE LARGEST LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM IN THE UNITED STATES.

5. CWO BLACK COINED THE PHRASE, "LIGHTHOUSES ARE LIKE PEOPLE -THEY COME IN MANY DIFFERENT SIZES, SHAPES AND COLORS," WHICH NOT ONLY EXHIBITED HIS APPRECIATION FOR HISTORY AND PRESERVATION, BUT ALSO SHOWED HIS ABIDING RESPECT FOR PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

6. THROUGHOUT HIS 83 YEARS, HE PUT SERVICE FIRST, BOTH TO THE NATION AND HIS COMMUNITY. HE RECEIVED COUNTLESS ACCOLADES AND COMMENDATIONS, AND YET WAS KNOWN FOR HIS HUMILITY. CWO BLACK PRESERVED AN IMPORTANT PART OF AMERICAN HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AND LEAVES A TREMENDOUS LEGACY.

7. ADM THAD W. ALLEN SENDS.



visit to the former-CGC *Ojibwa* (WYTM 97) at her new home in Savannah, GA.

She is now the M/V *General Oglethorpe*, working as a commercial docking tug in Savannah. We were met at Crescent Towing and Salvage by Amber Sellers of Crescent's Savannah office and Senior Dispatcher, Frankie Davis. Much to Amber's and Crescent's surprise, the "Inspectors" presented a framed print of the JIB and General, conceived and produced by President, Doug O'Dell. A "thank you" to Crescent (and Amber) for taking the time to deal with us "old Coasties;" this set the tone for a wonderful experience. They provided us with a tour of their operational headquarters and the ship, before taking us on a very enjoyable one hour tour of Savannah harbor aboard the "old JIB."

Considerably different in layout, controls, and power since my days aboard ('69-'71), she is still making an "honest" living after 64 years! Standing on the original deck and hull of my first ship, 37 years later, was an awesome experience. But, first, let's start with a brief history of the "JIB."

### History

Built in 1943, as part of the seven-ship, 110-ft *Apalachee*-class, at Ira S. Bushy shipyard in Brooklyn, NY, she was commissioned on 7 April 1944. She was named, as were all 110s, after Indian tribes. The *Ojibwa* (*Ojibway*, also *Chippewa*) were originally from the western shores of Lake

Superior in Wisconsin. With firearms from the French, they expanded their territory through warfare with the Fox and Sioux nations, eventually inhabiting areas of Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Michigan.

Designed for wartime service on the renowned Greenland Patrol, she was not deployed, but spent the remainder of World War II assigned to the 1st Naval District based in Boston, MA, conducting search & rescue, law enforcement, escort, and port security duties. She remained at Boston until 1954 when she was transferred to Buffalo, NY. *Ojibwa's* Coast Guard

career spanned nearly four decades in Boston and Buffalo. In addition to her normal duties of domestic icebreaking, SAR, and LE, she is credited with several notable operations: on 29 November 1951,

she participated in the rescue and assistance operation following a collision between the M/V *Ventura* and F/V *Lynn* near Boston; in February 1965, she spent the season breaking ice in the Buffalo area during a particularly harsh winter; in January 1968, she was assigned to test the ice-breaking plow, the *Alexbow*, in Great lakes ice; from 4 July to 14 July 1969, *Ojibwa* participated in the search/rescue/recovery

operation following a major gale on Lake Erie – she was the first ship out and the last to be relieved in the operation; in the Fall season, beginning in 1970, she performed Law Enforcement duties in the St. Lawrence Seaway, boarding, inspecting, and escorting Communist-bloc vessels down the



L-R: Sandy, Ed, & George on dock  
(Photo by Shirley Schwaab)



The Print: L-R: George, Ed, Amber, Sandy  
(Photo by Shirley Schwaab)

American waters to Canada; also, in the winters of 1970 and 1971 (and continuing until her decommissioning), she participated in the newly established Operation Coal Shovel in a Coast Guard attempt and study to keep the Lakes open to commercial traffic throughout the winter months. From August 1979 through April 1980, she was converted from fresh-to-salt water operation with plans to station her in Yorktown, VA as an OCS training vessel. These plans were cancelled and she was decommissioned in April 1980 and sold into commercial status that December. She continues to move vessels & barges, escort ships, and fight fires to the present.



*General Oglethorpe pier side*  
(Photos by Sandy Schwaab)

### The JIB Today

Noticeable from the above photos, other than the hull and main deck, the *Ojibwa* is not what many of us may remember. In addition to major modifications to the superstructure and deck house, she has undergone significant changes in the bridge, galley, passenger space, aft quarters, and engine room – suffice it to say, a different vessel, more in keeping with her new role as a commercial tug with reduced crew (4 instead of 21) working in Savannah harbor. As the old adage states, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Let’s take a look at the ex-*Ojibwa* in that way, with the appropriate “color commentary” from your local sportscaster.



*Bridge Controls*  
(Photo by Sandy Schwaab)

### New Layout and Systems

You’ve already seen the significant modifications to the superstructure and deck-house – let’s move on to the bridge and beyond.

As we climbed the ladder to the bridge, the first obvious vision was “where’s the wheel?” Technology

has replaced the four-foot, muscle-powered wheel with a finger-tip “joystick;” the engine annunciators with simple throttles. Gone are the old gyro compass and repeaters, replaced with GPS and computerized charting systems. We’ve come a long way (I guess). The galley/mess deck that we knew – two tables with benches, the forward head, starboard side galley with grills, ovens, reefers, etc – have been made to look and feel like your home kitchen and dining room. The television is still there...but much more high tech than when we had the rotating antenna atop the aft mast. One thing I specifically noticed, from a nostalgic point of view, was the original coxcombing, still on the bridge ladder hand rail from my days aboard. What a treasure – a tribute to some great Boat-swain’s Mate!

Moving aft and down, major changes have taken place. Gone are the old “passenger space” or ward room (depending on your YTM), the passenger space head, gyro room, and aft CO, XO, & EO staterooms. Replacing those areas is an open, upper engine room fiddly containing auxiliary equipment. The two Ingersoll-Rand main engines, main generators, switchboard, and all auxiliary machinery are gone from the B-1 engine room, converted from diesel-electric and replaced by one, V-16 General Electric diesel and a single reduction gear. Also gone is the entire B-2 space, including the main motor, auxiliary GM 6-71 generators and fire pumps, and the electro-mechanical cable steering gear. New generators, fire pumps, and auxiliary systems abound along both sides of the main engine. To say the least, this is a far cry from our old “plant.” While not our WYTM-97 today, she is still an



active contributor to commercial shipping. This was yet another great excursion for your “traveling inspectors” and we hope to visit the former CGC *Apalachee* in Oswego, NY for our next trip. Again, our thanks to Amber and Frankie, Capt. Charlie Warren, Chief Engineer George Morales and their crew, and Crescent Towing, for their support and enthusiasm on this visit.



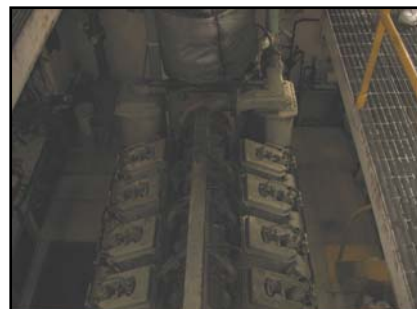
*Tribute to an old BM*  
(Photo by Sandy Schwaab)



*Not our old Galley*  
(Photo by Sandy Schwaab)



*The Old Snipe & C/E George Morales*



*GE V-16 from fiddly*  
(Photo by Sandy Schwaab)

## The Next “Ancient Tugger”...

By: Sandy Schwaab

In February 2007, I had the pleasure of meeting (via “snail mail” and “land-line”) CWO2 Francis J. LeSage, USCG, Ret. – the second Commanding Officer of *Ojibwa*. Born in August 1915, Frank is now approaching his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday! A fellow Walpole, MA resident, he had attended the Norfolk County Agricultural School since 1934, intending to be a farmer (located in Walpole – “townies,” in my day, used to just call it “The Aggie”). Frank viewed the local farming opportunities as rather slim, considering, in 1934, “there were nineteen farmers in this town, and thirty-nine farmer’s daughters.” Instead, he opted for a three-year tour in the Coast Guard, enlisting as a Surfman in 1937 and becoming a Boatswain’s Mate during his original three-year enlistment, fully expecting to save his money and attend college following his hitch. His first unit was CG Station Point Allerton in Hull, MA – the old home of famed life-saver Joshua James. Economic circumstances and a World War (there was a Depression and the possibility of the Draft...),

kept Frank in the Coast Guard to serve through the war and beyond. Prior to his tour as CO of *Ojibwa*, Frank served as part of the second wartime crew aboard CGC *Nanok*, a converted fishing trawler, on the famous Greenland Patrol. He would retire in February 1958 with twenty-one years of service.

I have spent many enjoyable hours on the phone with Frank over the last months and there is much more to his story. I hope to do a complete Oral History interview with Frank in the next few months and will provide a more in-depth vision of his career.

In the meantime, unless anyone is aware of a fellow member with an earlier enlistment date, I would like to nominate CWO2 Francis J. LeSage as our second “Ancient Tugger.” For all who see this edition, please forward to me any other nominations and/or your vote on CWO LeSage. Once the vote is tabulated and confirmed, appropriate recognition will be completed by the Board, and a presentation to Frank will be arranged and conducted. Let’s share this honor with Frank as a tribute to his devotion to duty and our standards as “tuggers.”

## Coast Guard Tug Association Reunion 2006

By: Doug O'Dell



*Attendees - Left to right, top row— Tom Cicala, Mike Del Monte, Skip Elder, Dave Mathieson, Joe Breneman, Skip Tyler, Bob Desh, Dave Vaughn, Sandy Schwaab, John Copland, Ed Anderson, Doug O'Dell, Scott Schultz.*

*Left to right Bottom row— Dave French & Daughter, Sandy Del Monte, Peggy Elder, Linda Staples, Dot Black, Ken Black, Roger Jones, Sandie Anderson, Shirley Schwaab, George Staples. Not pictured, Tim O'Dell and Jim Flynn.*

The third annual CGTA reunion was held 21 - 23 September 2007 at Mystic, CT and the CG Academy. Triple Kudos go out to Sandy Schwaab for putting together another great reunion. Some very memorable events were set up for this year's attendees and all went without a hitch.

Arriving Thursday, excellent accommodations were provided by the Mystic Hilton with a very nice banquet room and hospitality suite to meet and to tell sea stories. We were also treated to a night out at Foxwoods Casino with gifts and transportation being provided.

Friday began with a guided tour of the USCGC *Eagle* by two young Coast Guard cadets. For most, who had never been aboard our "flagship," it was very educational and a great time was had by all.

After the *Eagle* tour, we drove to

the CG Academy and assembled at the Greenland Memorial for a ceremony commemorating the Greenland Patrol and the sacrifices made by the Coast Guardsmen who served in this theatre of war during WWII.



Our Master of Ceremonies was CWO Sandy Schwaab with guest speakers, CAPT Bob Desh, Former CO, International Ice Patrol, and LCDR Byron Willefors, current XO of the International Ice Patrol. Presenting a ceremonial wreath was CWO Ken Black and CAPT Bob Desh. This was a solemn occasion for all, with taps sounding at the end of the ceremony followed by "Amazing Grace" played by the CG Academy Piper.

From there, after a little free time to walk the campus, we assembled at Hamilton Hall in the Henriques Room, by invitation, for cookies and punch. Some of the finest mural work I have ever seen adorned the walls of



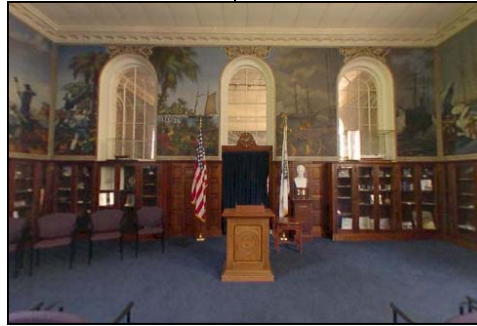
the Henriques Room. Afterwards, we gathered just outside Hamilton Hall for the Cadet Parade. It was an honor to be able to watch the whole Academy marching with band and pipers, color guard, and with the precision of a fine watch.

Our next stop, in an already busy day, was to the Officers Club where Happy Hour was about to start in the "Lee Rail." Again, as last year, they had some great hors d'oeuvres and fine drink. Learning a lesson from last year, we held back on the snacks in favor of a more enjoyable dinner that was soon to come.

This year the CGTA and CG Academy dedicated "Evening Colors" to one of its esteemed members and our "Ancient Tugger," Ken Black for his dedication to preserving the illustrious history of the U.S. Coast Guard and its light house services. Ken singlehandedly opened the eyes of the country to the need to preserve the history and artifacts of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and the Coast Guard's numerous lighthouses. Ken was founder of the Shore Village Museum and

Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland, Maine.

Ken was honored with the presentation of the American Flag which had flown over the Coast Guard Academy that day. A fine dedication speech was given at the podium by a young Cadet and a private demonstration was given by the Academy Ceremonial Drill Team. Evening colors ended with the entire color guard and drill team lining up to personally salute and thank Ken for his dedication to the Coast Guard and his preservation work. This event moved everyone in attendance.



*Henriques Room at Hamilton Hall.  
You should see it in person, fantastic!*

After Colors, we headed back to the Officers Club for our banquet dinner. No spoiled appetites here. We all thoroughly enjoyed a hearty meal of roast beef, seafood newburg, and all the trimmings. Our thanks to the club chefs and servers for a fine dinner.

This year's business meeting was called and some proposed changes to our reunions were discussed. We voted to begin having the CGTA reunions every other year. Several suggestions for the 2008 reunion were



Jim Flynn and Cadet tour guide



Cadet Parade



Mike & Barbara Del Monte, Skip & Peggy Elder, Tom Cicala, Joe Breneman



Dave Mathieson, Sandie & Ed Anderson



Capt. Desh (right) and friend



Dot & Ken Black, John Copland, Dave Vaughn



made: Tacoma WA, New Orleans, Cape May/Atlantic City, and Grand Haven MI. Feed back on these venues or more suggestions can be emailed to Reunions@cg-tugs.org. We need to hear from our membership regarding suggestions on where to have our next reunion in 2008.

This year also brought in a new VP. CAPT Bob Dersh, USCG, and former *Ojibwa* sailor, accepted the nomination for Vice President and the vote was unanimous. Welcome aboard CAPT Dersh!

On Saturday, we gathered for a new twist in our fundraising activities. This year we held our first

auction and raffle and it turned out quite successfully. Some interesting items were donated by members and organizations that went for auction. Sandy Schwaab and Dave Vaughn were the only two with the nerve to be auctioneers. It was not only fun, but profitable, with nearly one thousand dollars coming in to bolster our treasury.

And so goes yet another CGTA reunion. It was fantastic and Kudos go out to Sandy Schwaab for a job (again) well done! Also our hearty thanks to the CG Academy and Public Affairs Officer, CWO Dave French, for helping to provide a memorable 2006 reunion.



*Evening Colors*



*Flag presented to Ken Black*



*Drill team*



*Dinner for all*



*2006 reunion banner*



*Rockland Light/Snohomish auction*



*CGC Arundel in arctic camouflage*

## The "Prez Sez"

By Doug O'Dell -

This last year has brought about many changes and sadly, the loss of some of our membership. The loss of our "Ancient Tugger" Ken Black was a blow to us all and to the Coast Guard community. He will be sorely missed.



CGTA President - Doug O'Dell

Since our reunion last September, we have been very busy pursuing the goals we set forth at our business meeting.

One item we haven't resolved yet is a venue for our 2008 reunion. We need to hear some suggestions and we need to have volunteers to honcho the event. So far we have heard Cape May, New Orleans, and Grand Haven Michigan. We've had CGTA member Joe Peterson suggest Tacoma and offer to put it all together for 2009. There are two of our tugs there, the CGC *Comanche* and CGC *Modoc*. *Comanche* is in the process of becoming a non-profit 501 C3 corporation for restoration. (See story on page 11) *Modoc* is currently the *Modoc Pearl* and operates as a luxury yacht. Both of these ships were commissioned into the Coast Guard in 1959 and 2009 will be their 60th anniversary. A fitting celebration will certainly be in order and a reunion there in 2009 would be a spectacular event.



*Tug Comanche being moved to Olympia WA.*

Since our last newsletter we've had 58 New Members join the CGTA bringing our total membership to 373. To all our new members let me say "WELCOME ABOARD"!

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Anderson, Glenn - *Mahoning*  
Armstrong, Dan - *Bristol Bay*

Benevides, Arthur M - *Ojibwa*  
Bless, William - *Mahoning*, & *Wire*  
Bougie, Rich - *Capstan*  
Brola, Arthur - *Sauk*  
Brown, Matthew - *Yankton*  
Couture, Paul - *Messenger*  
Crane, Tom, LT. - *CO Thunder Bay*,  
Davis, David M - *Cherokee*  
Dehler, Bill - *Mahoning*  
Farkas, Jeff - *Raritan*  
Gasking, Robert - *Associate*  
Genier, Randy - *Bristol Bay*  
Gillette, Wray - *Capstan*  
Giltner, Mathew - *Yankton*, *Apalachee*, *Lipan*  
Golsner, Chuck - *Sauk*  
Goodspeed, Charles - *Acacia*  
Haaksma, Richard - *Ojibwa*  
Hedgepeth, Kevin - *Modoc*  
Hegarty, Michael E - *Mahoning*  
Hermans, Roger B T - *uckahoe*  
Hubert, Greg - *Snohomish*  
Kay, Charlie - *Ojibwa*  
LaSage, Francis - *Ojibwa*, **2nd CO**  
Leon, David - *Mahoning*  
Libby, Frank *Wire*, - *Penobscot Bay*  
McDermott, Kevin W - *Arundel*  
McGlone, John M - *Tamaroa*  
McHugh, Patrick - *USCG*  
Melnick, Jim - *Mahoning*  
Michaud, Zachary - *Neah Bay*  
Nathan, Ronald - *Cherokee*  
Oldenburg, William R - *Raritan*, *Yankton*, *64307*  
Parker, Dennis - *Yankton*  
Radpour, Paul - *Arundel*  
Rauss, Andrew - *Capstan*  
Reynolds, K B - *Chock*  
Rodkey, Richard - *Avoyel*  
Rollins, Paul - *Hudson*  
Ruterbusch, Travis - *Biscayne Bay*  
Saunders, Jay - *Raritan*  
Sergey, Jeremy - *Bristol Bay*  
Seymour, Steve - *Mahoning*  
Simms, Don J - *Modoc*, *Yocona*, *Acushnet*  
Smith, Robert - *Mahoning*  
Sutherland, Eric P LT. - *Bollard*  
Swanson, Robert C - *64314*, *Modoc*  
Thomas, Bill Jr - *Snohomish*  
Vincent, Terry - *Avoyel*  
Walker, Tim - *Mahoning*, *Edenshaw*  
Wiezorek, Steven J - *Avoyel*  
Wollschlager, Arthur L. - *64301*  
Galluzzo, John - *Foundation for Coast Guard History*  
Christian Wilson - *CGC Bollard*  
Herb Lewis - *CGC Cherokee*  
Donald K. Davey II - *CGC Mobile Bay*  
Thomas M. Torkelsen - *Tuckahoe*, *Mahoning*



## A BREATH OF LIFE FOR CGC COMANCHE

Joe Peterson—Tacoma [Edited]

Since the USCGC *COMANCHE* (WMEC 202) was decommissioned in 1980 she has had quite a journey.

After sitting for ages in the mud at the reserved fleet in San Francisco Bay, she was bought by a tug operator from Washington State and put to work as a commercial tug in the late 1980s, towing all sorts of floating objects around the Pacific, from Mexico to Alaska and Tacoma to Hawaii. Her career as a commercial tug began to wane in the late 1990s and she was tied up on the Foss Waterway in down town Tacoma until March of 2006 when she was moved to a scrap yard near Tacoma, her fate questionable.

At that time, the Coast Guard Tug Association got wind of the predicament and inquired about the possibility of saving her. The newly forming American Fleet Tug Museum in San Francisco stepped up to give the task a try, but after months of attempting to bring it together for themselves they floundered leaving *COMANCHE* anchored off the beach in Tacoma.

*COMANCHE's* owner took her back and approached we local former Coasties, who had been drifting around the attempts to save her, with the idea of forming our own non-profit foundation into which he could donate *COMANCHE* for preservation. In January of this year, *COMANCHE* was moved, under her own power, from Tacoma to Olympia. She preformed well enough to impress several of us to begin looking into the possibility of forming a non-profit which could accept her and restore her as a 'floating working historic vessel' (and not just a static museum piece.)

It's still in its exploratory stages, but on May 19<sup>th</sup>, the non-profit *COMANCHE* 202 FOUNDATION was approved by the State of Washington with Joe Peterson as President. Joe is a civilian instructor in the military today. In the 1960s, Joe spent 3 years and 3 months on Cutter *MODOC* (WMEC 194), *COMANCHE's* sister cutter, which was converted to a luxury yacht 20 years ago and is also near Tacoma. Other *MODOC* men have been supportive of this effort to preserve *COMANCHE*, too. Vice-President is CAPT Randy Corrigan,

USCG (ret). A former XO on Cutter *COMANCHE*, Randy lives just a few miles from her now. Joe and Randy have both had an active 'hands-on' involvement with *COMANCHE* since Spring of 2006. Secretary is Tom Payne, a Ferroequinologist, with extensive knowledge and expertise in vintage mechanical equipment as is found on *COMANCHE* today. Treasurer is Scott Larsen of Tacoma, CEO of Larsen LLC and Great Promotions!, who has also been involved since Spring of 2006; good board members with lots of experience and connections!

We have some outstanding advisors, too. RADM (ret) Al Steinman, former Coast Guard surgeon general, an expert on

sea-survival, who sees *COMANCHE* as having potential as a platform for continued training in wilderness and sea-survival. A few weeks ago Al and Randy found on board *COMANCHE* old USCG documents from 30+ years ago with Randy's signature as XO on them! There is a lot on *COMANCHE* that makes her a worthy project for historical purposes. Other advisors include Dick Lévesque, former radioman on *COMANCHE* and a well known marine artist today. And, to accentuate the life saving role of the Coast Guard, Ron Paddock, recipient of the Coast Guard Gold Life-

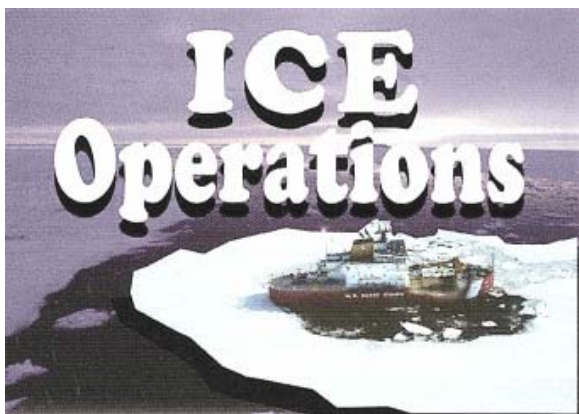
saving medal in 1966, has come aboard to support the effort to preserve and prepare *COMANCHE* for a new future. We also have enthusiastic support from the Coast Guard Tug Association and the National Association of Fleet Tug Sailors, both organizations have been very supportive of these efforts from the beginning, and, more recently, the Foundation for Coast Guard History.

We especially want to welcome aboard *COMANCHE's* former Coast Guard crewmen. Any and all are welcome to join us in this historic attempt to preserve and continue to give life to WMEC 202, Coast Guard Cutter *COMANCHE*. If you want more information and would like to get our updates and schedules, send us your email or mailing address.

You can see more of *COMANCHE* as she is today at [www.cg-tugs.org](http://www.cg-tugs.org) – go to CG Tug Fleet and click on 143 footer. It's not a 'done deal' yet, but it is well on its way! Thanks and smooth sailing to you! Official email:

[COMANCHE\\_202@hotmail.com](mailto:COMANCHE_202@hotmail.com)





# Going for Bust

## *The challenges facing the Coast Guard domestic icebreaking fleet.*

by LT BRENDAN O'SHEA,

*U.S. Coast Guard Office of Maritime Transportation, Mobility and Ice Operations*  
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For those who live in areas where ice forms on the waterways, Coast Guard icebreaking operations are critical to the local economy and ensure the year round delivery of vital supplies. Without the aid of the Coast Guard domestic icebreaking fleet, ice formation on the Great Lakes and on the rivers and harbors of the East Coast would render most vessels inoperable during winter months.

On the Great Lakes, icebreaking allows for an extended shipping season for cargo such as iron ore, coal, and grain. In the Northeast, icebreaking ensures that critical shipments of heating oil are delivered. In addition, Coast Guard icebreakers break ice jams to help prevent flooding in the Great Lakes, the Northeast, and the mid-Atlantic regions.

### Ice Operations

The majority of Coast Guard domestic icebreaking operations is accomplished by 10 icebreakers. The icebreakers consist of the newly commissioned CGC *Mackinaw* and nine 140-foot icebreaking tugs (called WTGBs). Additionally, 11 65-foot small harbor tugs provide icebreaking services in shallow waterways.

A successful icebreaking program is one that allows commercial traffic to continue uninterrupted during the winter months. In winter 2006, the Coast Guard did exactly this for the Great Lakes, resulting in the shipment of an additional \$750 million in goods.<sup>1</sup>

The Coast Guard domestic icebreaking program measures its effectiveness by recording the number of days that a critical waterway is closed due to excessive ice during an ice season. "Critical" Waterways are defined

by considering factors such as the amount of commerce moved on the waterway, the availability of an alternate route, and the density of traffic. The domestic icebreaking program has met its critical waterway performance measure (to have no more than two critical waterway closure days per winter) for four out of the past five years. Severe winter conditions, coupled with a decision to try to extend the ice season longer than normal, led to the program not meeting its goal in 2003-2004.

### Uncertain Future

Despite its consistent success, the icebreaking program faces a serious challenge. The 140-foot icebreaking tugs commissioned from 1978 to 1987 are rapidly approaching the end of their 30-year service life, with no mid-life extension maintenance scheduled or funded. During the winter of 2004-2005, the icebreaking tug *Mobile Bay* was inoperable for six weeks during the middle of the ice season due to an engineering casualty. During the 2003-2004 ice season, another of the WTGBs, *Morro Bay*, was also inoperable for several weeks.

Replacement parts are typically not readily available because some of the equipment and systems on the icebreaking tugs are outdated and the parts need to be specially ordered, if they are commercially available at all.

The domestic icebreaking fleet has proven itself to be a vital capability for a multitude of missions, and its positive impact on the nation's economy is substantial. The WTGBs are a critical part of ensuring that the nation continues to enjoy the benefits of domestic icebreaking, but unless an extensive maintenance or replacement plan for these assets is put in place soon, they face an uncertain future.

### About the author:

LT Brendan O'Shea has served in the Coast Guard for five years. Prior to joining the Mobility and Ice Operations Division, LT O'Shea completed tours on a high-endurance cutter and an icebreaking tug. LCDR Bernard Sandy, a WTGB sailor of eight years, also provided invaluable assistance with this article.

**Endnote:** 1 - CG memo from CAPT M.D. Hudson CGD Nine (dpw) to COMDT (GPWN) 16500.



## Chug-A-Lug Tug "Dirty Tricks"



*Thanks to Ojibwa CO, Dan Riksen for this one*



**TO:**

RETURN IF UNDELIVERABLE