



# The Cutter

The Newsletter of the Foundation for Coast Guard History

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*Hindsight gives birth to foresight*

## **DENNIS NOBLE RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

Dr. Dennis Noble, retired Coast Guard Senior Chief Petty Officer and joint founder of this organization, received the Coast Guard's Distinguished Public Service Award. Rear Admiral Kevin Eldridge made the presentation at a ceremony at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on May 12, 2003

This award is not lightly given. Few are more deserving than Dr. Noble. Besides being instrumental in creating the Foundation for Coast Guard History, he has written nearly a dozen books, most of them on Coast Guard historical subjects. He is a keen observer of organizations and bureaucracies. He is astutely frank in relating his conclusions. Occasionally he may have even brought high officials up short. In spite of, or perhaps because of those traits, Dr. Noble received this very prestigious award. Dr. Noble has contributed significantly to preserving the traditions and history of the United States Coast Guard. Congratulations, Dennis and thank you for your wonderful support.

## **COAST GUARD PRESERVES ITS HISTORY**

In mid-March the Commandant issued an instruction to all units on how to preserve the historical events involved in the Iraq situation. This is the first instruction of its kind.

Progress is being made.

## **PTERODACTYLS PRESERVE AVIATION HISTORY**

A pterodactyl is a dinosaur that once was able to fly. The Coast Guard has many still in existence. An organization of Coast Guard aviators and aircrewmembers with some 1200 members, based at the Air Training Center in Mobile, Alabama, the Ancient Order of the Pterodactyl preserves the history of Coast Guard aviation. They also cooperate fully with our efforts on a Service-wide basis.

Their current project, among many, is to preserve and display CG aviation history materials, including documents, photographs and other scannable items which can be saved and/or displayed in a digital format.

CDR Gib Brown, USCG (Ret) designed a website linked to the Pterodactyl site, an impressive work in progress. Many photos and writings obtained from various sources have been screened, scanned and posted, but only the first few steps have been taken in what will be a long journey. The initiators recognize that the Coast Guard does not have and never has had adequate resources to collect, store, organize and make accessible much of its history, notwithstanding the diligence and expertise of the people in the CG Historian's Office at CG Headquarters. Much of the history of CG aviation is in files at air stations, museums and with the personal memorabilia of aviators and aircrews, and much is (over)

(Aviation History continued) scattered and disorganized. Not much is accessible. As a result, current and past participants in Coast Guard aviation, as well as the public, are denied the rich history of this vibrant organization.

The Pterodactyls are supporting new efforts with encouragement, member participation and initial funding for equipment and website maintenance. Computing and scanning equipment has been purchased for the use of volunteers in the Washington, D.C. area who will be working with the Office of CG Historian to digitize aviation history records now at Headquarters. Volunteers in the D.C. area are urgently needed to help with this project and are asked to contact Ptero Bob Johanson at [robtjohanson@aol.com](mailto:robtjohanson@aol.com) or 616 Lakeland Rd. South, Severna Park, MD 21146 or 410.647.5272.

Later plans include volunteers to screen and digitize materials at air stations.

The pertinent websites are: [www.AOPtero.org](http://www.AOPtero.org) and <http://uscgaviationhistory.aoptero.org>. The second site includes advice on how to contribute materials to the project. You may also write directly to the AOP, P.O.Box 9917, Mobile, AL 36691-9917. If in doubt about the historical significance of any item, just send it

## **ICARUS and DAEDALUS**

In Greek mythology, Icarus was the first aviator. He and his father, Daedalus were imprisoned in the Cretan Labyrinth, a prison that Daedalus built. The only way out was to fly. They created wings of feathers held together with wax. Icarus flew too high and too close to the sun, the wax on his wings melted and he fell into the sea.

Icarus International, Inc, a nonprofit organization established in 1993 is sponsoring a Monument to a Century of Flight to be located adjacent to the Welcome Center in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Your Foundation is sponsoring a portion of that Monument commemorating Life Saving Service participation in that event. *See next story.*

## **WRIGHT BROTHERS**

This year is the 100th anniversary of man's first controlled flight. In December 1903 Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully flew at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Nearly everyone is familiar with that event, the birth of aviation. There are other facts, not so familiar, that are important to the story.

Near Kitty Hawk was the Kill Devil Hills Life Saving Station. The crew of Kill Devil Hills helped Wilbur and Orville with every step of the preparation for each flight. The equipment shed at the Life Saving Station was the temporary storage and assembly base for the aircraft. The crew helped move the craft to the take off site and after each flight, helped move it back to the take off site. The Life Saving Station crew were aviation's first ground crew.

During the initial taxiing for each flight, one crew member held the end of each wing to keep the craft level until it achieved air speed. During one of these trials, one crew member got his hand caught in the rigging and could not let go. He was the first aviation passenger.

When he finally was able to let go, he had cut his hand. Thus, we have the first aircraft injury.

December, 1903 changed the world. The predecessor of the U.S. Coast Guard, the U. S. Life Saving Service was there and actually created a series of very important firsts in the history of aviation.

## **MONUMENT TO A CENTURY OF FLIGHT.**

Each of us has an opportunity to contribute to this monument, mentioned elsewhere on this page and described in detail on page 5. The Foundation is accepting donations, cash, check or credit card for our portion of the monument. Contributions may be made on line: [fcgh.org](http://fcgh.org) or by mailing to either of our addresses at the top of the first page.

## AWARDS 2003

The award program for 2003 has been lively as ever.

The Unit Award is presented to that unit engaged in specific undertakings that further public awareness of current activities or the rich heritage of the U.S. Coast Guard. There is always keen competition among the units and great imagination displayed in portraying our rich heritage. Each winning unit received \$200 for its morale fund.

The winner in the large units category is USCGC CHASE (WHEC 718) that has a ship's historian, a brochure on current and past history of CHASE, a CD, a web site and a program to maintain contact with previous crew members thereby preserving the history of this fine vessel.

The winner in the small units category is USCGC MONHEGAN (WPB 1305). This unit has a Coast Guard history training program, video documentation of operations, a historical record, and a program to foster local and international awareness of USCG. Key West, Florida is the home port of MONHEGAN.

The Heritage Award is presented to the person who contributed to preserving the heritage of the U.S. Coast Guard prior to the establishment of the Foundation for Coast Guard History. This year there are two recipients.

Wayne C. Wheeler is recognized for his work in creating the U.S. Lighthouse Society, an internationally recognized leader in lighthouse history.

Sloan Wilson, recognized for his books on Coast Guard activities during World War II, is known for his best seller *The Man In The Gray Flannel Suit*. After Mr. Wilson was selected for this award, but before we were able to present it, we were informed that he passed away in mid-May. Another great loss.

*For news of additional awards see page 4*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*We receive many letters from readers after each newsletter, many with suggestions we try to incorporate. All of them are very nice, supportive letters. This time we received one that corrected many errors in our recent articles. We apologize for the errors. The author is in a far better position to have the facts than we are. I print below as much of his letter as there is space, and as much as my shattered ego will allow. Thank you, Maurice Gibbs for keeping us historically accurate.*

"Great to receive the "Foundation for Coast Guard History" newsletter. Sign me on to receive future issues via email and save your cost of mailing.

"Am not, nor have ever been a member of Scituate Maritime & Irish Mossing Museum. Have been President, Nantucket Life-Saving Museum since 1993. It is the oldest museum dedicated solely to lifesaving and CG story in America. Later was a 'founding Director' of U.S. Life-Saving Service Heritage Association that formed in Sept 1995. Have been its President since Sept '97. Until recently, John Galluzzo, another USLSSHA Director, Clerk and Editor of "Wreck & Rescue" was also Exec. Dir of Scituate Maritime & Irish Mossing Museum. Bet that is who you were thinking of.

"On page 2, col. 2, you say, "The merchants erected the first light at Boston Harbor in 1716 and shortly after created the Massachusetts Humane Society to assist seafarers." Actually the MHS was organized 69 years later in the fall-winter of 1785. (*Ed: historically 69 years is not that long.*) Its first formal session was in Jan. 1786 when it elected James Bowdoin, then Governor of MA as its first President."

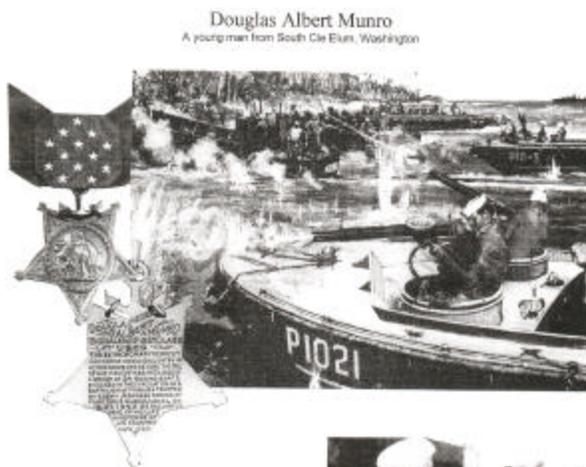
Maurice Gibbs  
President USLSSHA

*Ed: For more of Maurice Gibbs contributions, see "Life Saving Stations" page 7*

## MUNRO HONORED AGAIN

The only person in the U.S. Coast Guard ever to have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor has been honored again. On the sixtieth anniversary of the invasion of Guadalcanal, the government of the Solomon Islands issued a series of postage stamps honoring recipients of the Congressional Medal during that invasion in WW II.. Douglas Munro is the only Coast Guard member to be so honored.

On May 24, 2003 in his hometown of Cle Elum, Washington, the CG Museum/NW arranged to have the U.S. Postal Service issue a special cancellation to commemorate the occasion. The Museum has also created a special Commemorative Sheet, 8"x10" in full color on heavy stock. A replica is depicted below. Philatelists and any others who wish to obtain these special commemorative cancellations may contact the CG Museum/NW at 1519 Alaska Way South, Seattle, WA 98134. The cost is \$5.00 per item requested. Checks are payable to the CG Museum/NW.



Douglas Albert Munro was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on October 11, 1919. He grew up in South Cle Elum, where his father was manager of the electrical substation of the Milwaukee Railroad, which ran electric trains from Othello west over the mountains. After attending one year at the Central Washington College of Education, he enlisted in the Coast Guard in September 1938. His first duty was on the USCGC Sparrow in the North Atlantic. He was aboard the USS (Lacandon) Wood when it brought British and Canadian troops into Singapore in early 1942. By August 1942 he was on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and participated in many landings on that island. During the famous Battle of Savo Island he spent the long nights saving survivors. On September 27, Doug was in charge of 24 landing craft that put 500 Marines ashore at Point Cruz. The Marines saw soon in trouble and needed evacuation. Munro took his boat back in under heavy fire from the beach. As the last of the Marines were removed, and they were departing, Douglas Munro was fatally wounded.



In 2000, to commemorate the Battle of Guadalcanal, the Solomon Islands issued a series of stamps to remember the 20 men who were awarded the Medal of Honor for duty there. Douglas Munro is the only Coast Guardsman ever to receive the Medal. The stamp is cancelled here on May 24<sup>th</sup> as this is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day that Jerry and Edie Munro were in the White House to receive their son's Medal from President Roosevelt. That same day, Mrs. Munro became an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve, commonly known as the SPARs. *Source: Douglas Munro, 1919-1942*

## CHARGE CARDS

The Foundation for Coast Guard History has finally entered the computer age. Until recently we have not been able to accept charge cards as means of paying membership fees. This has now changed. As an historical organization we have been accepting only checks, preferably written with a quill. Now you may join our growing membership in the modern way. At the present time, only Visa and Master Card charge card accounts can be processed. We need your card type, card number, expiration date, name and address and amount you wish to have charged against your account. We hope this will be convenient for more of you.

## MORE AWARDS 2003

The Foundation recognizes books published in two categories: "Lighthouses and Aids to Navigation" and "C.G. Heritage." This year the award goes to: Cheryl Anne Finnerty, *Lighthouses of Boston Harbor, Past and Present*. Honorable Mention to: Wayne S. Sapulski, *Lighthouses of Lake Michigan*.

In the "Heritage" category Honorable Mention (in alphabetical order): Russell Drumm, *The Barque of Saviors: Eagle's Passage from the Nazi Navy to the U.S. Coast Guard*, and Robert Frump, *Until the Sea Shall Free Them: Life, Death, and Survival In the Merchant Marine*.

From time to time the Foundation gives a Special Recognition Award to an individual or unit who provides a unique service to preserve our heritage. This year CWO4 Allen Mordica is recognized for his work as one of the founders of the Tidewater Maritime Living History Association. The Association improves public awareness of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service through living history demonstrations.

## WEB SITE ACTIVITY

During just the first half of July our web site was visited by over 11,000 individuals from all over the world. Were you one of them? Try it, you'll like it at [www.fcgh.org](http://www.fcgh.org)

## **MONUMENT TO A CENTURY OF FLIGHT**

The Foundation for Coast Guard History (FCGH) Project to Commemorate a Century of Flight was officially launched in a brief ceremony June 9, 2003, close to the site where Orville Wright piloted the Wright Flyer on its historic First Flight, December 17, 1903.

With a Rescue Helicopter (HH-60J) from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City providing the backdrop, VADM (Ret.) Howie Thorsen and RADM (Ret.) Bob Johanson accepted from the Icarus International Foundation a replica of the 16 foot stainless steel pylon, one of fourteen wing-shaped pylons comprising the Icarus Monument to a Century of Flight that is being sponsored by the FCGH to honor the Coast Guard's rich aviation history, as well as the tremendous contributions to numerous U. S. coastal communities by the crews of the U.S. Life-Saving Service Stations and Coast Guard Boat Stations. Joining in the ceremony were CAPT (Ret.) Terry Beacham, CWO (Ret.) Hope Beacham, and Jesse Ward...all descendants of the U.S. Life-Saving Service surfmen who ably assisted the Wright brothers before, during, and after their historic flight. Also in attendance, representing the Coast Guard lifesavers of today, were CAPT Bruce Drahos, Commanding Officer AR&SC, CAPT Rod Ansley, Commanding Officer CGAS Elizabeth City, and LCDR John Homan, Commander CG Group Cape Hatteras.

The Monument to a Century of Flight, described in detail at [www.icarusinternational.com](http://www.icarusinternational.com), will be located adjacent to the Aycock Brown Welcome Center in Kitty Hawk, NC. Dedication of the monument is planned for September 27, 2003.

All work associated with this fund-raising effort is being done by volunteers, and nearly all administrative costs are being borne by FCGH and The Ancient Order of the Pterodactyls (AOP), a non-profit organization whose members are former or present pilots and crewmembers of Coast Guard aircraft, plus other individuals interested in and supportive of CG aviation.

Donations to defray the cost of the \$60,000 pylon are fully tax deductible and may be made by check (mark "for MCOF project") to FCGH, c/o Coast Guard Museum/ Northwest, 1519 Alaska Way South, Seattle, WA 98134, or on-line (VISA or Mastercard) via [www.fcgh.org](http://www.fcgh.org) web site.

A One-year membership in either the FCGH or in The AOP Ancient Order of the Pterodactyl will be offered to donors contributing \$20 or more (E-4 and below, \$10.). Donors above that level may be acknowledged by complimentary mementos; see [www.fcgh.org](http://www.fcgh.org) for current information.

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## **HISTORICAL TIDBIT—COMMISSION PENNANT**

Its origin is said to date back to the seventeenth century when the Dutch were fighting the English. The Dutch admiral hoisted a broom at his masthead, to indicate his intention to sweep the English from the sea. The gesture was answered by the English admiral who hoisted a horsewhip, to indicate his intention to chastise the insolent Dutch. The English carried out their boast and ever since, the narrow, or coachwhip pennant (symbolizing the original horsewhip) has been the distinctive mark of a vessel of war and has been adopted by all nations.

The commission pennant, as it is called today, is blue at the hoist with seven white stars (of no particular significance except that it looked good that way), and red and white at the fly in two horizontal stripes..

## **PETE CAPELOTTI RECEIVES MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL**

Dr. Pete Capelotti, CPO, USCGR has received the Meritorious Service Medal. This is a singular honor. On the rare occasions awarded, it is usually given for directing a large group of people in a major effort . Chief Capelotti received it for the work he accomplished virtually alone. "This is a HUGE recognition for his work" said VADM Howard Thorsen, Retired.

Dr Capelotti was recalled to active duty following the events of September 11, 2001 to record and analyze the events within the Coast Guard and the impact on future operations. He has visited every district, every office and every unit that had any connection whatever with the events of that day and immediately following. His inquiring mind and incisive questions probed to the very core of the decisions made at all levels in the Coast Guard. This is the first, almost real-time chronology of significant events in the history of the USCG.

Dr. Capelotti is a professor at Pennsylvania State University , the author of several books on history and archaeology, a fellow of the Explorers Club and one of the most practical, down-to earth people you would ever hope to meet.

## **CG VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL**

The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association is sponsoring the construction and installation of two identical memorials to the more than 8000 Coast Guard personnel who actively participated in our country's was in Vietnam. One memorial will be placed at the USCG Training Station at Cape May, New Jersey. The second will be placed at the USCG Academy, New London, Connecticut.

The design includes the names of all vessels, units, detachments and support activities involved in the war. Also it will include

an abstract of CG theater missions, activities and operations.

Contributions in support of this project should be made payable to: CGCOMVETS Vietnam Memorial Fund.

Your contribution is tax deductible. Mail your contribution to:

William G. Hicks  
586 Fairwood Drive  
Tallmadge, OH 44278-2026

## **CHARACTER IN ACTION**

The Naval Institute Press has announced the publication of a new book by recently retired USCG Commandant Admiral James M. Loy. He joined with best selling author Donald T. Phillips to explain how the USCG has developed a culture of innovation and is able to do so much with so few resources and even less fanfare. One reviewer:" Character in Action shows how the Coast Guard became the best-run agency in the federal government– not just efficient, but an organization with a heart and vision. This book is full of useful ideas and perceptive insights."

## **TODAYS HISTORY TODAY**

They've rescued sailors lost in perilous seas, busted drug runners and mustered forces to respond to countless natural and man-made disasters - the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the devastating Hurricane Hugo and the fatal crash of TWA Flight 800, to name a few.

They've also been in charge of major U.S. ports, warships, military aircraft and small boat rescue crews. They've held titles like law enforcement agent, medic, teacher, pilot and commanding officer.

They are the Seebalds - eight brothers and sisters who've all served in the U.S. Coast Guard for, at present count, more than 120 years of combined service. When the last two siblings to join were sworn in 13 years ago, the admiral that presided over the cere-

*See Seebalds on next page .*

## LIFE SAVING STATIONS

*The following is more of the contribution of Maurice Gibbs which started on page 3.*

The Massachusetts Humane Society initially used membership subscriptions to fund a prize to anyone who could come up with a technique to revive "the nearly drowned." Today we call it CPR. Some of the techniques may have killed more than they saved. Yet they tried.

In 1787, the MHS built the first three of many "huts of refuge". The first was on the west side of Lovell's Island in Boston Harbor. Two others were at Nantasket and Scituate Beaches. The building program continued for decades with many huts built and rebuilt as storms would wipe them out. Four survive to this day in Nantucket county and several more on Cape Cod and along the coast.

In 1807, the MHS built and equipped the first volunteer lifesaving station in America, at Cohasset. The first lifesaving boat was 30 feet long with a 10 foot beam. It was rowed with 10 men and had a sweep oar at EACH end. By 1859 there were 61 structures (lifesaving stations, mortar stations or huts of refuge) in the inventory. Ten years later there were 92 such structures along the coast.

As recently as 1930 the MHS was still operating 12 volunteer lifesaving stations. The last station, at Cohasset was decommissioned in 1936. Thus, long after the creation of the U.S. Lifesaving Service and long after the creation of the U.S. Coast Guard, the Massachusetts Humane Society was still filling the void left by the Congress. As it was then, it remains today. Volunteers still fill unfunded voids in federally provided services.

## ARTISTS PALETTE

On an artists palette are a wide variety of colors, tints and hues. If any one tint is missing, the resulting picture is not the same. Each tint makes the difference between an ordinary picture and a masterpiece. If the world is like the palette, can we afford to exclude anyone?

**SEBALDS** *continued*-mony informed them that they were the largest immediate family to serve in one armed force in the United States. Then-Mayor James Griffin also proclaimed the date as Seebald Day in Buffalo.

Three of the remaining four Seebalds still in the Coast Guard retired together in a ceremony July 11th in Chicago.

Capt. Raymond Seebald is the senior of the three, in his 26th year of service. He is the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Chicago, and the Captain of the Port of Chicago. His career highlights include serving as a White House aide, acting as the last U.S. representative to the Panama Canal Authority during the canal's transition of ownership.

Cmdr. Edward Seebald is retiring after 20 years of service, from his current post in Manhattan as the director of 3,800 Coast Guard Auxiliarists Edward used the skills of these volunteers to mount a response to assist New York City firefighters and police officers during and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York. He's also the Seebald with the most sea time - 9 1/2 years spent on four Coast Guard Cutters. Both Raymond and Edward have also traveled the world to give training to foreign navies and other foreign government agencies.

Petty Officer 1st Class Theresa Seebald has served the Coast Guard for 13 years as a medical technician. She was one of the first people to respond to the tragic crash of TWA Flight 800, where she was charged with the daunting task of setting up a temporary morgue for recovered victims. She also served as an instructor at a treatment center for recovering drug abusers and alcoholics.

Raymond, Edward and Theresa will leave their brother, Matthew, to carry the torch as the last of the Seebald siblings remaining in the service. Matthew currently serves at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington.

Do you know of other families like this?

