



## New Memorial Honors the Ultimate Sacrifice of Coast Guard Enlisted National Coast Guard Museum Association

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# FROM THE CHAIR

## Legacy and Future

My connection to the National Coast Guard Museum began, in some ways, in 1953, when my father was a young man before he became a household name. James David Power, better known today as J.D. Power III, had just completed his degree at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA.

The Korean War was waning, but my father knew that he needed to join a service. Raised in landlocked central Massachusetts, he had never traveled further from home than New York. He joined the Coast Guard to serve his country with the hopes to expand his horizons. Near the completion of Coast Guard Officer Candidate School, he hoped for a warmer climate and made Hawaii, San Diego and Florida his top choices for assignment. As fate would have it, he received his orders to serve on the polar icebreaker CGC EASTWIND out of Boston Harbor. After some deployments into the arctic region, the EASTWIND departed for Antarctica as part of the very first Operation Deepfreeze in 1955, which to this day is still an important and active mission.

Growing up hearing the many tales and stories of my father's service made it clear to the family these were formative years that greatly defined his perspective on leadership. His time in the Coast Guard contributed profoundly to the success of J.D. Power and Associates.

When, at a similar age, I found myself looking to expand my horizons, I didn't even tell my father I enlisted until after the fact. After eight weeks in Cape May, I was assigned to a Port Security Unit out of Boston, as well. The four years I spent in the Coast Guard Reserve were just as impactful on me as my father's service was on him.

Joining the effort to create the National Coast Guard Museum feels like an opportunity to carry on my service. We are extremely grateful to be a part of this important project. Ultimately, the future Museum is about the brave men and women who serve our Nation every day. We want to honor the heritage of over two centuries of service, respect the sacrifice of those who are serving today and inspire the next generation to serve our great United States Coast Guard.

Semper Paratus,



Susan J. Curtin



# A FITTING MEMORIAL

## Coast Guard Medal for SA William Flores

by MCPOCG Vince Patton, USCG (Ret.),  
Museum Association Board of Directors

On the evening of January 28, 1980, there was a collision between the Coast Guard Cutter BLACKTHORN and the 605-foot oil tanker, SS CAPRICORN near the entrance to Tampa Bay, FL. Immediately, the BLACKTHORN rolled to port and capsized before the ship's personnel could prepare for an orderly abandon ship. Many shipmates displayed bravery amidst the frenzied effort to get everyone to safety. Sadly, 23 lives were lost that night.

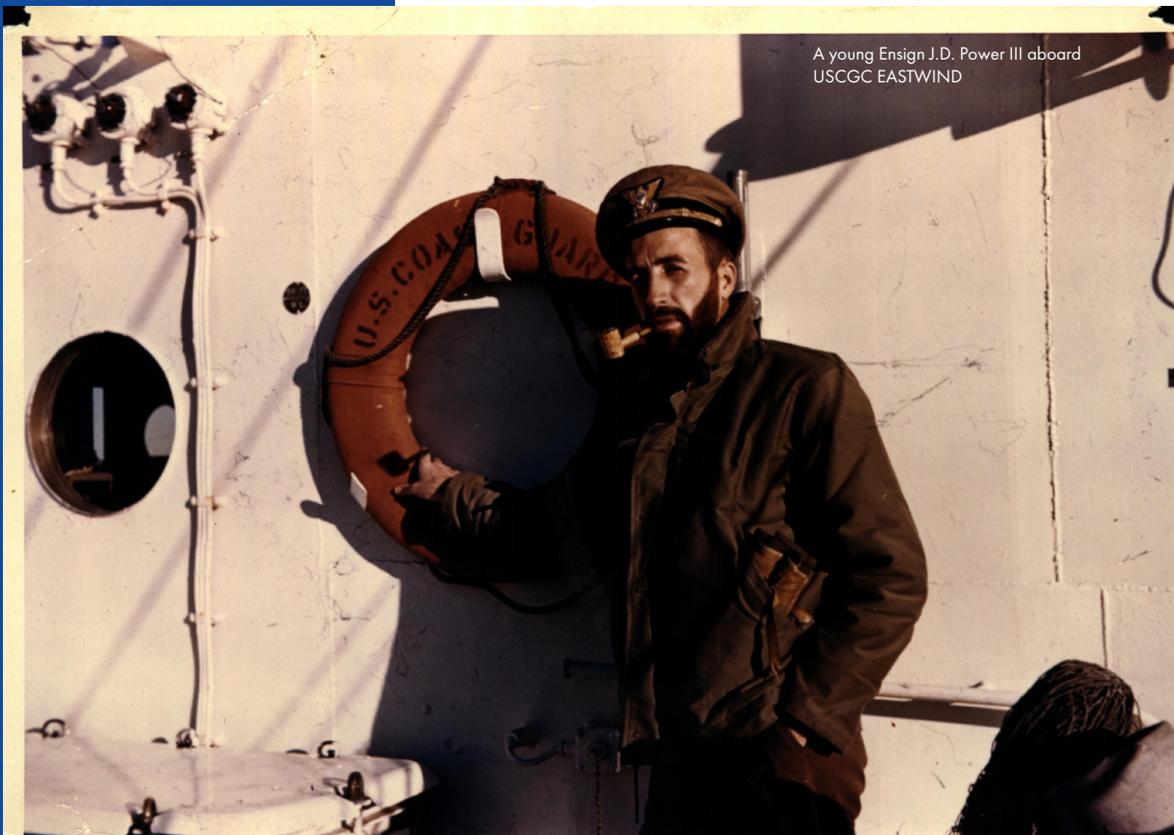
The death toll may likely have been much higher if it weren't for the courage of one crew member whose heroism went unrecognized for over two decades following the tragedy.

Early in my tenure as MCPOCG, I attended the memorial gathering for the USCGC BLACKTHORN on January 28, 2000, which commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the tragic accident.

After the memorial service, three crew members who survived the sinking approached me, and told me that one of the perished shipmates was never recognized for his heroism. All three believed that it was the efforts of this newly reported Coast Guardsman that saved their lives. The problem was, (CONTINUED on page 6 BLACKTHORN)



SA William Flores



A young Ensign J.D. Power III aboard  
USCGC EASTWIND

# GOVERNOR THOMAS J. RIDGE HONORED WITH ALEXANDER HAMILTON AWARD

Former Pennsylvania Governor and United States Secretary of Homeland Security, **Thomas J. Ridge**, was recognized on May 6 with the Alexander Hamilton Award, the most prestigious recognition bestowed by the National Coast Guard Museum Association. The award is named for Alexander Hamilton, who established the Revenue Cutter Service—a predecessor of the U.S. Coast Guard—in 1790. The honor, given annually since 2015, recognizes **an individual who has contributed outstanding service in support of the future National Coast Guard Museum.**

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Ridge became the first Director of the Office of Homeland Security and eventually in 2003, was appointed the first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

During his tenure, Secretary Ridge worked to strengthen national borders, provide for intelligence analysis and infrastructure protection, improve the use of science and technology to counter weapons of mass destruction, and to create a comprehensive response and recovery division. Ridge served as Secretary of Homeland Security until February 1, 2005.

Secretary Ridge has served as Co-Chair of the **National Coast Guard Museum Association Secretaries' Circle** since its inception in 2014. The Secretaries' Circle represents an unprecedented and bi-partisan collaboration that spans decades and administrations comprised of all of the former Secretaries of Transportation and Homeland Security, the cabinet departments which have overseen the Coast Guard. The group has unified to support the building of a national museum honoring the Coast Guard. Each year, the Secretaries' Circle hosts a gathering on Capitol Hill to provide an update to Washington, D.C. stakeholders on the project's progress.

"Like Alexander Hamilton before him, when our Nation needed him most, Secretary Ridge had the vision to establish a new cabinet department to meet unforeseen demands," said **Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., USCG (Ret.)**, Vice Chair of the National Coast Guard Museum Association Board of Directors. "Secretary Ridge's leadership and support have been integral to our efforts to honor the courage and sacrifices of our service men and women with a museum that both celebrates their heroism and inspires generations to come."



Museum Association Chair, Susan J. Curtin, Governor Thomas J. Ridge and ADM James M. Loy, USCG (Ret.)

Museum Association Director, **Admiral James M. Loy, USCG (Ret.)**, presented the award at the National Maritime Awards Dinner. A capacity crowd of over 400 people packed the National Press Club at the annual event, held in partnership with the National Maritime Historical Society.

"Secretary Ridge has been a committed leader in the efforts to create the National Coast Guard Museum," said **Captain Wes Pulver USCG (Ret.)**, Museum Association President. "We are humbled by his support and feel honored to present him with this well-deserved award."

Secretary Ridge was passionate, humorous and very clear in his acceptance speech. "I am proud of my service in the Army," Secretary

**“I may have worn Army green, but I’m a barnacle on the long blue line!”**

Ridge said. "There are Army museums everywhere. There are no museums for the U.S. Coast Guard. That's just wrong. We have to elevate the history and service of the United States Coast Guard."

"I may have worn Army green, but I'm a barnacle on the long blue line." Ridge said to great applause.

To conclude the event, the Coast Guard Cadet Chorale sang a medley of the service anthems of all five armed services. Secretary Ridge stood with his Army compatriots for *The Army Goes Rolling Along* and then sat back down. As the chorale reached the climax with *Semper Paratus*, the Coast Guard anthem, Ridge rose and stood proudly alongside his good friend and colleague, Admiral Loy.

# NEW CAPE MAY MEMORIAL HONORS ENLISTED



## Over 1,700 shipmates throughout Coast Guard history commemorated

A sunny and typically breezy Cape May morning greeted hundreds of visitors on April 27. The crowd was as diverse as the enlisted membership of the Coast Guard - recruit companies learning the ropes at the Training Center marched in formation, while veterans struck a more informal stance as they reconnected with former shipmates and caught up.

The campaign to create an Enlisted Memorial at Cape May began nearly a decade ago and there was an appropriately celebratory air mixed with the understanding that the beautifully carved granite monuments were filled with names of over 1,700 service members who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank and Eileen Redd

The names date to 1915, the year the Revenue Cutter Service and Life Saving Service were merged to create the Coast Guard. Their names, ratings and dates of death include men and women lost in war, and those who gave their lives saving others.

The memorial exists thanks to the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Foundation, a small volunteer group that, with help from Coast Guard enlisted leadership, raised \$450,000 from donors, veterans groups and other fundraisers.

"I am humbled to stand here today in front of the names of enlisted heroes that gave their life," said **Master Chief Petty Officer Jason Vanderhaven**.

Foundation President, **Tom Dougherty** began his remarks with the staggering statistics of an average day in the Coast Guard: 45 search



WWII Veteran Frank DeVita, 94, receives a standing ovation





MKCM Stephen H. Peterson, USCG (Ret.) and CDR Terry O'Connell, USCG (Ret.) serve as President and Vice President of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

and rescue missions, ten lives saved, 874 lbs of cocaine seized. "At times," Daugherty continued, "this average day comes at a great cost. For over 1,700 people performing a Coast Guard mission, the cost was their life."

The location of the memorial was chosen to both honor the enlisted ranks, and inspire new recruits. Situated on the edge of the parade ground, "The openness of the memorial allows company commanders to bring their recruits here" and instill the ethos of the service, Dougherty said.

Many in attendance were families of those lost, including the family of **Seaman Recruit Aaron Redd**. Redd passed away in July 2016, a week into his enlistment, after he collapsed on a 1.5 mile initial fitness assessment run with his company Delta 193. A Coast Guard report concluded Redd's death was caused by heat-related illness, exacerbated by an underlying medical condition.

Redd's parents, **Frank and Eileen Redd**, described the memorial as "breathtaking. It means the names are etched in stone as well as being etched in our hearts." Eileen Redd continued, tears streaming down her face, "The Coast Guard community is the most sincere, loving family. We're overwhelmed. This is more than we could have dreamed."

A stirring moment in the ceremony came when the Commandant, **Admiral Karl L. Schultz**, acknowledged the oldest Coast Guard veteran in attendance. **Frank DeVita**, 94, was a gunner on a Higgins landing craft during the D-Day invasion on the Normandy coast of France on June 6, 1944. The crowd immediately rose for a prolonged standing ovation.

**Steve Peterson**, President of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association, said "This is a tribute to those lost on active duty. It's important they be recognized. Life in the Coast Guard can be dangerous at times."

See more photos at [coastguardmuseum.org/events](https://coastguardmuseum.org/events)

## WELCOME TO THE COAST GUARD!

The National Coast Guard Museum Association congratulates **India 107**, the newest company of recruits to complete boot camp at the Training Center at Cape May, NJ.

Friday May 3, 2019

Photo credit: Seaman Isaac Cross, Official USCG photo.



## BLACKTHORN (Continued from page 2)

they weren't sure of his name because he was new to the crew, and they barely knew him. What they did know was that he was one of the three recent arrivals that reported on board BLACKTHORN within the past four months prior to the accident.

They told me that they all remembered seeing this crewmember tossing life jackets out from the locker as the ship began going down. When he couldn't get all of the flotation vests out quickly enough, he took off his belt and tied the locker door to the railing, so the life jackets would freely fall out.

One of the survivors reported that he saw this unidentified hero go into the ship as the BLACKTHORN capsized, to assist in opening a jammed hatch where several crew members were trying to get out.

The survivor shipmates told me that they had given statements during the board of inquiry about this unidentified crew member. All three agreed that they believed it to be SA William Flores. Flores had only been on board the BLACKTHORN for four months or so after completing boot camp.

Although his shipmates were assured that their statements about Flores would be reviewed and considered for recognition, the event I attended marked the 20th anniversary of the accident, and they had not heard any news as to whether the Seaman Apprentice was given any recognition for his action.

I knew I had to investigate this matter further. When I got back to Coast Guard Headquarters, I engaged my staff to look into this matter. We had to obtain the board of investigation records from the National Archives, about 800 pages of the full details surrounding the cause of the accident, as well as individual testimonies from all of the BLACKTHORN survivors. Our review took several weeks because of the volume of information provided. My team and I confirmed that, just as the BLACKTHORN survivors had reported, there were 11 statements regarding the unidentified crewmember credited with saving so many lives.

Due to darkness and the general commotion on the deck, many of the survivors were unable to definitively determine who had acted so courageously on behalf of others. However, four of the eleven



MCPO Vince Patton and RADM Paul Pluta

**“Job well done, Shipmate. Rest in Peace and thank you for your selfless service.”**

statements specifically named Flores with varying degrees of certainty that it was their new shipmate.

Once my staff and I gathered the details, I contacted the Coast Guard Investigative Service, which is standard procedure to begin an awards investigation to formally document the information and prepare evidence for the Coast Guard Medal. After seven months of reexamining the reports, the evidence factually documented that the unidentified crewmember was indeed Seaman Apprentice William Ray “Billy” Flores.

I personally wrote the award recommendation and citation for the Coast Guard Medal, which was later approved by the Coast Guard Awards Board in July 2000.

On Sept 16, 2000, along with the 8th District Commander, **RADM Paul Pluta**, I had the privilege to present the Coast Guard Medal posthumously to SA Flores's parents, Robert and Julia Flores. The ceremony was held at his gravesite in Benbrook, TX.

The quest to research the actions of SA Flores became something of a spiritual journey for me. As I read through the board of investigation, and the follow-on interviews, I couldn't help but visually put myself aboard, watching this whole action as it unfolded. I was consumed with the intention to ensure that Flores be properly recognized for his unwavering action. Most amazing was that he had only been in the Coast Guard for about eight months at the time this happened!

Immediately after RADM Pluta and I made the formal presentation of the Coast Guard Medal to Mr. and Mrs. Flores, we both knelt before their son's headstone. I then spoke to SA Flores's headstone and said, “Job well done, Shipmate. Rest in Peace and thank you for your selfless service.”



MCPO Vince Patton embraces Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Julia Flores



# MIDDLE PHASE OF EXHIBIT DESIGN KICKS OFF

## Design Development brings clarity to concepts

On April 30 and May 1, the Coast Guard hosted a two-day workshop to kick off the detailed middle phase of the exhibit design process known in the industry as Design Development.

Team members from the Coast Guard Historian’s Office joined the exhibit design team from **SEARCH, Inc.** and **AldrichPears Associates** and Museum Association crew members who have been contemplating the exhibits and visitor experience for several years.

Rather than a comprehensive review of the 200+ exhibits planned for the Museum, the workshop focused on specific elements about which the design team required greater clarity. The agenda was based on feedback received from the Exhibit Design Group and a focus group review of the Schematic Design held at Coast Guard Headquarters in February.

One example discussion regarded the need for the Coast Guard overview wing to place more emphasis on the core values of the Service, namely, **Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty.**

The process of cataloging and evaluating the artifacts stored in crates in the Coast Guard warehouse in Virginia continues to proceed, enabling the team to begin making decisions about which artifacts may be included. Staff members from **SEARCH, Inc.**, who have been assisting the Historian’s Office with this process, enlightened workshop participants about artifacts relevant to the Service’s work following Hurricane Katrina and regarding the Fresnel lenses that could be selected for inclusion in the **Aids to Navigation** section of the **J.D. Power III Stewardship Deck.**

The team from AldrichPears and SEARCH also met with curatorial staff at the **National Museum of the Marine Corps** and the **National Museum of the U.S. Navy**, which are both in the region. Useful insight was gathered regarding suspending a military grade helicopter and the opportunities around educational programs for school-aged children.

The Design Development phase for the exhibits will continue throughout the summer.

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## HONORARY CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

<sup>1</sup>President George H. W. Bush (1999-2018)

<sup>1</sup>Arnold Palmer (1999-2016)  
J.D. Power III

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## EXHIBIT DESIGN TIMELINE

### Phase I

2018 Fall  
Schematic Design

2019 Winter  
USCG Review

### Phase II

Spring—Fall  
Detailed Design

### Phase III

2020 Winter  
USCG Review

Spring—Summer  
Construction Documents  
USCG Review

The National Coast Guard Museum will engage, educate and inspire visitors from around the world by honoring the courage and skill of the men and women of our Nation’s unsung Armed Service. The Museum will explore the Coast Guard’s rich history and current impact on our nation and the world through interactive exhibits, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) based learning experiences, leadership development programming and public/private partnerships.