

**In Remembrance of Captain Sumner R. (“Bud”) Dolber, USCG (Ret.)**

**Commanding Officer, USCGC Southwind (WAGB-280), 30 October 1966 to 6 June 1969**



Captain Sumner Raymond (“Bud”) Dolber passed away on Wednesday, 24 June 2015, at his home in Melbourne, FL. He was born on 19 February 1924 in Waltham, MA and enjoyed a wonderful life as a devoted husband, loving father, and inspiring leader. Preceding Captain Dolber in death were his parents, Raymond Sumner and Harriet Starr Dolber, his brother George Dolber, and his beloved wife Helen. Captain Dolber is survived by his sister Edna Dolber of Waltham, MA, daughter Karen Coleman and husband Joe of Satellite Beach, FL, son Mark and wife Ellen of Baltimore, MD, son Paul and wife Caroline of Galveston, TX, and daughter Anne Macon and husband Robert of Baker City, OR. He is also survived by seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Captain Dolber decided to join the USCG at an early age and upon graduation from high school fulfilled his childhood desire when he received an appointment in 1941 to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) located in New London, CT. The increasing demands of World War Two (WWII) expedited his USCGA Class of 1945 graduation date from June 1945 to June 1944, and upon graduation he received a Bachelor of Science degree, a commission as an Ensign in the USCG, and orders to his first cutter.

His initial duty assignment was as a Deck Watch Officer aboard the *USCGC Mojave* (WPG-47), a 240-foot cutter assigned to wartime operations on the Greenland Patrol that included convoy escort and search-and-rescue (SAR) operations in the patrol area of Boston, MA, Newfoundland, and Greenland. It is a historical fact that *Mojave*'s and the other escort vessels' convoy and anti-submarine accomplishments in this patrol area were vital to helping win the “Battle of the Atlantic.” While aboard *Mojave*, Captain Dolber changed from Deck Watch Officer to Student Engineer, married his fiancée Helen (who he had met in high school in 1940), and after the war ended proceeded with *Mojave* from Boston, MA to her new homeport in Mobile, AL. When *Mojave* was decommissioned in 1947 he reported to USCG recruiting duties in Dallas, TX, Jackson, MS, and Houston TX.

In September 1948, Captain Dolber transferred to Vallejo, California as the selected Operations Officer for the pre-commissioning detail of the *USS Barataria*, a 311-foot ex-U.S. Navy seaplane tender (AVP) that was converted from wartime use to a weather-reporting vessel for future USCG operations as an “Ocean Station” (OS) vessel. On 10 January 1949 *Barataria* was commissioned in the USCG and departed for her new homeport of Portland, ME. During his tour aboard *Barataria* Captain Dolber completed several OS deployments.

Ocean Stations were manned by USCG cutters off both coasts of the U.S., and the station consisted of a 110-mile square area with the on-station grid consisting of a 10-mile square of water. Transit to and from the designated station were in addition to the 21-day patrol period, and the cutter's primary duties on station were providing weather observations, supplying navigational assistance to transoceanic aircraft, and acting as the ready SAR asset for ships and planes crossing the oceans. Normal rotation was 30-days out on station, including transit time, 30-days in port time for training and maintenance, and repeating the process over again. During this period and later OS cutters were subjected to some of the heaviest weather the sea had to offer and veterans later reflected that while on station seamanship was survival.

Upon tour completion aboard *Barataria* he reported to and satisfactorily completed Merchant Marine Indoctrination School and served in the Merchant Marine Safety field by successfully completing increasingly responsible positions within Merchant Marine assignments in Baltimore, MD, Washington, D.C., and New York.

In later years he returned to sea and completed one weather patrol on the St. George, Staten Island, NY based *USCGC Rockaway* as Executive Officer (XO) before transferring to the *USCGC Casco* as XO in Boston, MA. Both *Rockaway* and *Casco* were 311-foot ex-U.S. Navy seaplane tenders, identical to *Barataria* he had served in previously, and all were used for OS duties. After *Casco* his next tour of duty was as Commanding Officer of the *USCGC Evergreen*, a 180-foot WLM Buoy Tender modified to complete oceanographic work worldwide. She was homeported in Boston, and while in command Captain Dolber completed two International Ice Patrols seasons with search and rescue duties during the winter months. In 1959 he returned to shore duty as Officer-In-Charge of Marine Inspection (OCMI) in New London, Connecticut, and in 1963 was selected as the Deputy Commander, Coast Guard Activities, Europe.

Upon successful completion of his European tour in 1966, Captain Dolber was selected as the Commanding Officer of the precommissioning detail of *USCGC Atka* in Boston, MA. In 1964 the national icebreaking program was consolidated under the USCG and one by one the vessels formerly under naval control were transferred to the USCG. In the fall of 1966 *Atka's* turn came.

She was decommissioned by the Navy on 31 October 1966, struck from the Naval Register, and commissioned in the USCG after Commander John S. Blake, USN relinquished command to Captain Sumner R. Dobler, USCG. Shortly thereafter he and her new crew sailed *Atka* from Boston to her new homeport in Baltimore, MD where she entered the Bethlehem Steel Shipyard on Key Highway in preparation for Arctic East 1967 and what would follow.

On 18 January 1967 *USCGC Atka* was renamed *USCGC Southwind*, and by so doing completed a remarkable historical cycle: after more than 20-years, 3 name changes, and a career of honor under both the flag of the Soviet Union and commissioning pennant of the U.S. Navy, *Southwind* finally returned home to the USCG. Under Captain Dolber's command and inspirational leadership *Southwind* accumulated numerous accomplishments and some are as follows:

**Bermuda - 28 May 1967:**

- Completed shakedown training enroute to Bermuda.
- Towed disabled yacht *Gytha* from 50 miles north of Bermuda to that island.

**Arctic East 1967 - 1 July 1967 to 7 August 1967:**

- Enroute to Greenland crossed the Arctic Circle on 29 June 1967.

- During Arctic East 1967 deployment, served as an escort for vessels requiring transit through ice fields and conducted oceanographic research along both coasts of Greenland.
- Escorted the special repair ship *USS Aeolus* and its assist vessel *USS Seneca* in repairing an underwater communications cable that had been severed near Thule Air Force Base, Greenland.
- Completed Arctic East 1967 and enjoyed port liberty calls in Thule, Greenland; Godthab, Greenland; Argentina, Newfoundland; and Goose Bay, Labrador.

**Deep Freeze 1968 - 15 December 1967 to 25 March 1968:**

- Enroute to Antarctica crossed the Equator on 30 November 1967 and Antarctic Circle on 4 January 1968.
- Assisted in the construction of a U.S. scientific station on Anvers Island.
- Ran aground on an uncharted pinnacle of rock near Arthur Harbor, Antarctica. Subsequent wire drags of the harbor revealed numerous dangerous rock pinnacles. As a result of damage sustained in the grounding escorted to Panama by *USCGC Glacier*, traveled through the Panama Canal alone, and accompanied to Baltimore by *USCGC Cherokee*. Found out later that both vessel escorts were assigned as a precaution so as to pick up survivors if *Southwind* foundered prior to reaching Baltimore!
- Completed Operation Deep Freeze 1968 deployment to Antarctica and enjoyed port liberty calls in Rodman, Panama Canal Zone; Valparaiso, Chile; and Punta Arenas, Chile.

**Deep Freeze 1969 - 14 November 1968 to 3 April 1969:**

- Enroute to Wellington, New Zealand crossed the International Date Line on 11 November 1968.
- Along with *USCGC Burton Island* and *USCGC Glacier* broke into and freed up ice leading into McMurdo Sound and McMurdo Station, Antarctica.
- During ice operations sheared off the starboard propeller, and had to return to Wellington, New Zealand for emergency drydock repairs and propeller replacement.
- Escorted Danish *M/V Thala Dan* in the resupply of an Australian Antarctic station, and helped construct the new Wilkes-Casey station.
- Assisted in the construction of a satellite tracking station on Heard Island located in the Indian Ocean.
- Completed Operation Deep Freeze 1969 deployment to Antarctica and an around the world cruise. Enjoyed liberty port calls in Rodman, Panama Canal Zone; Wellington, New Zealand; Campbell Island, Antarctica; McMurdo Station, Antarctica; Hallet Station, Antarctica; Wilkes-Casey Station, Antarctica; Freemantle, Australia; Heard Island, Indian Ocean; Port Louis, Mauritius; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Zanzibar, Tanzania; Lorenzo Marques, Mozambique, and return to Baltimore.
- Awarded a Coast Guard Unit Commendation for exceptional meritorious service during the period of 14 November 1968 to 2 April 1969 while engaged in Operation Deep Freeze 1969 and subsequent operations in support of U.S. Military programs and scientific research projects.

Upon completion of his very successful tour as *Southwind's* Commanding Officer Captain Dolber was relieved by Captain Edward Cassidy on 6 June 1969, transferred to USCG Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and retired to Baltimore, MD a year later. After retirement he became a partner in a marine surveying firm in Baltimore and later surveyed cruise ships in the Caribbean, often accompanied by his wife Helen, until his full retirement in 1989. By then Captain Dolber and Helen had bought a 30-foot sailing vessel, cruised Chesapeake Bay extensively, and were active members of the Chesapeake Bay Alberg 30 Association. When they weren't sailing in the Bay they made 4-1/2 round-trips to Florida on their sloop *Beowulf* via the Intercoastal Waterway and eventually settled in Satellite Beach, FL. During this time they also returned to England 4 times to visit friends and completed 2 trips to Greece, including one on a chartered sailboat where they sailed the Saronic Gulf, part of the Aegean Sea, off Greece. Their

love of sailing also took them on a tour of Canada's Maritime Provinces, including spending a week in Newfoundland.

In addition to being a devoted husband, loving father, inspiring leader, accomplished Coast Guard officer, seasoned mariner, and an expert maritime surveyor, Captain Dolber was also a true "Square-Knot Sailor," a mariner who had crossed the Arctic Circle, Antarctic Circle, the International Date Line, the Equator, and completed an Around-the-World cruise during his lifetime - an accomplishment few have since duplicated!