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YOUNG OLD-TIMER RETIRING FROM COAST GUARDS

George Harrison Meekins has Had Diversified Career with the Life-Savers

Cape Hatteras.—Midnight Monday brings to an end the long and colorful career of the "last of the great surfmen" in the tradition of the U. S. Coast Guard's Lifesaving Service when Lieutenant Commander George Harrison Meekins, commander of the Cape Hatteras group, is retired from service. Commander Meekins reached the statutory age of retirement on Christmas day when he was 62 years old.

With the rank of Chief Warrant Officer, Commander Meekins was in command of the group, with headquarters on Cape Hatteras when war erupted off the Point with the first onset of German undersea raiders in January 1942, and for six weeks, he, with a crew of 15 men, augmented by three flying boats from the Air Base at Elizabeth City, alone were able to challenge the submarines and gather up the dead that littered the beaches.

Before spring, his command was increased to about 300 men—and 60-odd horses and several kennels of K-9s—when national defense began to function, but before the U-boats were checked a total of 108 ships had been lost almost within sight of the station here and many scores of lives. The battle raged from Lookout Shoals to Currituck but mostly it centered off this Cape where raiders lay in wait for the convoys zig-zagging close to shore.

But though he saw war at its bloodiest under the eaves of his station, Commander Meekins, when a reminiscent mood if upon him, would hark back more frequently to the rescue of the crew of the "Kohler", last of the 4-masters to be off the coast of North Carolina. Mr. Meekins led the crew of Little Kinnakeet station to the foundered ship when the great storm of August, 1933, was at its height.

Eight men, one woman and one cocker spaniel were brought safely off in the breeches buoy and, although the beach was awash from Oregon Inlet to Cape Hatteras, with water averaging waist deep, the crew were taken to a place of safety. Mr. Meekins was captivated with the dog and soon thereafter as he could manage, got himself a cocker spaniel. His present cocker goes into retirement with him. The foundered Kohler, a wooden schooner, was burned for her metal in 1941.

Born in Kinnakeet in 1889, Mr. Meekins was fishing in Pamlico Sound before he can remember and just before his 16th birthday suffered shipwreck between Wade Point and Caroon's Point when the oysterman on which he had sailed to Elizabeth City capsized in a blizzard on the return trip. The youth clung to the bottom of the capsized bugeye for six hours when he was rescued, virtually frozen, by a buoy boat enroute from Maryland to Swan Quarter.

After another season or two of oystering and fishing he joined the lighthouse service for two years and then, when he was not advancing at the rate he wanted, he moved to the U. S. Engineers. He was 30 years old before his father, the late Isaac T. Meekins, completed his own 30 years in the Life Saving Service and retired, that the younger man yielded to the inevitable. He joined and was sent to a station in Florida. It took him five years to work his way back to his native Coastland—and the rating of Chief Bos'n Mate. He served in many of the stations from Cape Fear to Wash Woods, with commands at Big Kinnakeet and Little Kinnakeet. He was at the latter station when the Kohler was lost.

That storm of August, 1933, spelled the doom of not only the Kohler, but of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and Cape Hatteras Life Boat Station as well. Both were abandoned because of beach erosion. A new lighthouse and a new lifeboat station were built and Mr. Meekins activated both, as commander, on March 1, 1939. He continued in command until 1944 when he was assigned to District Headquarters in Norfolk where he helped to set up the newly organized Air-Sea Search and Rescue operation. Later he was to command Fort Macon group and three years ago returned to his home district to resume command.

Although he relinquishes command of the group at midnight Monday, Mr. Meekins will not be paid off until he goes to Norfolk . . . On the 17th we sighted a bomber which dropped food but before we could retrieve same its . . . See CAREER, Page Two

RETIREES THIS MONTH



LT. G. H. MEEKINS is the subject of a colorful story written by Aycock Brown. He has had a long and interesting career with the Coast Guard, and retires with old 1951, as officer in command of the Cape Hatteras group of Coast Guard stations. In an early issue we will run a story about the up and coming young officer who is taking his place, Lt. Julian Gray, native of Salvo, and member of a prominent Coast Guard family.

FORMER COMMANDER DARE VFW POST DIES

Curtis Potter Lewis, 40, a native of Aurora, but a resident of Manteo for the past 15 years, died suddenly at his home Saturday morning, near Manteo.

He was a former commander of Dare County Post 9959, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and had served a long period in Germany in World War II, 17 months.

He was employed by the National Park Service at Kill Devil Hill. He was the son of Mrs. Laura Lewis and the late Mack Lewis of Beaufort County, and the husband of Mrs. Nancy Etheridge Lewis.

Funeral services were conducted Monday afternoon at 2:30 at Twiford's Funeral Home. Rev. Gilbert Mister, the old family friends, officiated. Masonic rites were conducted at the grave.

Besides his wife and mother, he is survived by one son, Curtis Potter Lewis, Jr., and one brother, Charlie L. Lewis of Lowland.

HIGH TIDES ON FISHING GROUNDS

Low Tides Between Hours Shown Oregon Inlet for December

	A.M.	P.M.
Friday	28 6:52	7:10
Saturday	29 7:45	8:05
Sunday	30 8:36	9:00
Monday	31 9:30	9:55

MEN-AND-THE-SEA

TRUE STORIES OF BRAVE OLD DAYS

Gallant Deeds of By-Gone Years in The Walter Raleigh Coastland.

A CHRISTMAS STORY OF SEAFARING ON THE COAST

Hatteras—Except for Lady Luck, an invisible crew member of the wartime converted yacht, Zaida, designated by Eastern Sea Frontier as CGR 3070, this story may never have been written. Lady Luck was aboard on December 22, 1942, or else the CGR 3070, hopefully lost for more than a month would have drifted past the red flashing buoy and into certain destruction which at the time was Hatteras Mine Field. Another CG patrol craft out of Ocracoke Section Base overhauled the 3070 and warned her crew to stay south of the red flashing buoy.

On December 22, Curtis Arnall, Chief Boatswain Mate in charge of the auxiliary sail and motor vessel had entered the incidents of the day as follows: "2130 sighted red flashing buoy. Prepared to lay off until day break. Hailed by patrol boat. Asked to heave to until daybreak staying south of the buoy. We sailed south and were lost by the patrol boat. Lat. 34-49 N-Longitude 75-00 W."

On the following day, the log entry related a finale to a saga of the seas that had started on November 27 at the Coast Guard's Greenport, L. L. Patrol Base and ended near dangerous Diamond Shoals, oftentimes called the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" which was even more dangerous during the early days of the war, by the creation of a mine field which in the final analysis probably resulted in more vessels being lost in the vicinity than actually sought refuge in the "protected" anchorage it surrounded. The December 23 entry:

"Overhauled by dirigible (Navy). Dropped food which carried a message: 'Your position has been reported. Sit tight. Aid on the way.' Went below and gouged ourselves. We were taken off around 1600 by CG 400. Our vessel taken in tow by another 400. WHAT A CHRISTMAS PRESENT. 34-30 N. 75-30 W."

Indeed it was a Christmas present for the nine man crew of the CGR 3070. She had scudded overmuch of the West Atlantic since departing for a routine tour of duty offshore from her base at Greenport, only to be caught in a storm that continued day after day for more than a month. The going for first five days out of Greenport was no more rugged than could be expected for a sailing craft at that season. On December 2 gales were forecast but the men who manned the ships of what some called the "Hooligan Navy," could take it. Most of them were ex-yachtsmen who wanted to do something, and did during the dark days of 1942 when America's fleet of better fighting ships had to do the best possible with fighting craft available in covering many sea front-

iers throughout the world. In addition to Boatswain Mate Arnall, the 3070's crew included Joseph Choate, BM1c; Vance M. Smith, BM2c; Toivo Koskinen, Theodore Carlson, Edward R. Jobson, James Watson and Arnold Windsor, seamen first class and Ward Welmer, coxswain.

It was mid-morning on December 3. The glass was low—and dropping. The wind was blowing a gale and increasing. Except for two oil-clad men in the cockpit the 3070's decks were deserted. Seas were breaking over the decks. As the northwester increased, the vessel scudded ahead under a trysail. Around noon, the biggest wave of all washed over the vessel. The cabin was flooded with water over one foot deep covering floor boards. The heavy sea resulted in injury of three men. At the time, the 3070 was in Latitude 40 North and 70 West, approximately.

On December 4 the gale continued and the 3070 scudded southeasterly but the little vessel was taking a licking. Injured men presented a gloomy picture. Plight of the craft had been reported and the crew were hoping for assistance. There was salt water in the gasoline tank and it was necessary to depend entirely on sails. At the time the food supply was gone. The mizzen mast and sail had been carried away when the big sea crashed over the vessel the previous day and also part of the main-sail. Every busy man, balling water or manning the ship.

First hope of rescue came the following day when an English destroyer took the 3070 in tow. But the tow was of short duration. Beginning a 4:30 o'clock the hawser parted about 7:30 due to too much speed in towing. Apparently the destroyer which had headed northeast by east was bound for Nova Scotia. "We were lost off Georges Bank, another graveyard of the Atlantic," remarked Capt. Arnall many days later at Ocracoke Section Base while telling the story to officials. From then, the time the tow hawser parted until the craft fetched up at the edge of Hatteras Minefield more than two weeks later the voyage was one nightmare after another.

Capt. Arnall's report carried the following excerpts: "Planes circled us while we were in tow but then departed. . . . On December 9 we were able to get radio message through stating that conditions were satisfactory except for injured men. Unable to get further messages through on that date. . . . On December 12 we still had ample food and then on December 14 we were overhauled by convoy which tried to give assistance but couldn't as seas were too high. See STORY, Page Two

Low Tide Near Hatteras Inlet Reveals Reminder of December 1899 Shipwreck

Most Calamitous and Entirely Needless Tragedy Claimed Lives of 21

By AYCOCK BROWN
Hatteras Inlet, N. C. — Whirlpools swirl over the location when the tide is at flood, but on low water, 52 years later, the rusty and blackened iron which once furnished power for the schooner-rigged British tramp steamer Ariosto, comes into view again as a grim reminder of a shipwreck which the old timers of Hatteras and Ocracoke still talk about.

The year, 1899, due to the memorable "August Storm" had caused much destruction and resulted in many maritime tragedies along the Outer Banks of North Carolina, but, as the official report of the U. S. Life Saving Service described it, "The most calamitous, because entirely needless, loss of life during the entire year, or indeed for many recent years in the history of the Service, occurred on December 24, 1899, at the wreck of the British Steamship Ariosto about two miles southward of the 30 persons on board the vessel, 21 Ocracoke Life-Saving Station. Of perished, while there was in the conditions not the slightest necessity that a single one should have been lost."

The ship, a vessel of 2,265 tons, was laden with a valuable cargo of wheat, cotton, lumber and cotton seed meal. She was commanded by a Captain R. R. Baines and when she hit the bottom close to Hatteras Inlet and within a stone's throw of the northeast shore of Ocracoke Island, the crew's first thought was that they had foundered on dreaded Diamond Shoals from which few ships, once they ever survive. The Ariosto was bound from Galveston for Liverpool with a bunkering stop planned for Norfolk.

It was on a Sunday morning, a very dark one at that, when the vessel struck bottom. When Captain Baines reached the bridge the ship was surrounded by "white water," which indicated breakers. Naturally the first thought, due to the blackness of the night, made even blacker by a blizzard out of the north, was Diamond Shoals. A actually the ship had gone aground 15 miles southwest of the dangerous Outer Diamond.

Attempts to abandon ship were made. Lifeboats overturned and crew members were thrown into the cold but boiling surf. Had they only known that aid was close by every had could have stayed

SWAN QUARTER PAGEANT GIVEN FOR CHRISTMAS

Narrators Tell Story of Nativity as Tableaux Are Formed by Players

A Christmas pageant, "Carrying the Light," was presented at Providence Methodist Church in Swan Quarter Sunday night. It was in the form of tableaux shown as the narrators, Mrs. Dick Lupton and Bill Cochran, Jr., read the Christmas story.

The part of Mary was taken by Miss Norma Earl Swindell and that of Joseph by Merlin Berry. Pratt Williamson, Jr., appeared in the role of Isiah. Shepherds were Joseph Cahoon, Roger Swindell, Jimmy Williams and William Harris. Kings were Wahab Cahoon, Ralph Swindell and Nat Williams.

Candle lighters were Dorothy Mason, Carol Williams, Lila Lee, Sibly Swindell, Betty Lee, Jane Harris, Ella Lou Cahoon, Doris Tunnell, Barbara Steele, and Rosetta Spencer.

Accompanied by Mrs. W. G. Harris, a robed choir sang intermittently throughout the pageant. A solo, "O Holy Night," was sung by Miss Mildred Spencer. In addition to the pageant, a Christmas treat for the children of the Sunday School was distributed at the church school hour Sunday morning. Gifts and bags of candy, nuts and fruit were given.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

The Providence Methodist church in Swan Quarter held a "Candlelight Service" Sunday evening, Dec. 23 at 6 o'clock. The readers for the program were Mrs. Dick Lupton and Bill Cochran, Jr., Miss Norma Earl Swindell and Merlin Berry portrayed Mary and Joseph in the nativity scene. W. G. Harris and Miss Aleph Cason were the directors.

CURRITUCK NEIGHBOR GETS LOTS OF PRAISE



JUDGE CHESTER MORRIS of Coinjock is a young man on the Superior Court bench. He is well known and popular in Dare county, and we run his picture to remind his friends that of late he has been getting a lot of praise in the press of the state as he goes about the counties holding court, for the fair and able manner in which he presides and administers justice. It seems to us Judge Morris wins more favorable comment than any . . . See MORRIS, Page Two

DEATH AT SALVO ON NEW HIGHWAY CHRISTMAS DAY

Richard W. Gray, 52, Loses Life; Two Coast Guardsmen Injured; Deceased Has Son in Korea

Richard W. Gray, 52, son of the late Roswell D. and Angelina Midgett Gray of Salvo, and husband of Mrs. Estella O'Neal Gray, met death Christmas, about 7:30 p. m., near his home as the result of an automobile mishap.

Two Coast Guardsmen, W. Jennings Midgett, Jr., of Rodanthe and Linwood Midgett of Salvo, suffered injuries and were taken to Marine Hospital, Norfolk, by a Coast Guard helicopter.

According to reports reaching Manteo, Jennings, Jr., and Mr. Gray had been riding in an old Model A truck which had stopped on the road. Linwood Midgett of the Rodanthe Coast Guard station was riding with Orville O'Neal in a Dodge pick-up truck belonging to Fred O'Neal.

Funeral services were to be held Thursday afternoon. Mr. Gray was a fisherman and boatman, and a lifelong resident of Salvo. He was a member of Clark's Bethel Methodist Church.

Mr. Gray is survived by three son and a daughter, Wesley W., Tommy, Miss Nellie, and Manning Gray, the latter being with the armed forces in Korea.

FUNERAL OF T. A. TILLET

Funeral services for Thomas Ave Tillet, who died at the family residence at Manns Harbor Thursday afternoon, were conducted Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock in the Manns Harbor Methodist Church by the Rev. A. L. G. Stevenson, pastor.

During the service members of the church choir sang "Farther Along" and "Nearer My God to Thee" and a duet composed of Miss Lyla Gard and Mrs. Eddie Burgess sang "Lord, I Am Coming Home" accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Martha Creef.

The casket was covered with a pall of red carnations and white glads. Interment was made in the Twiford Cemetery with Roy Midgett, Wallace Taylor, H. T. Gibbs, Jackie Burrus, Clarence Holmes and Richard Mann serving as pallbearers.

MRS. FANNIE LONG EVANS DIES IN LEXINGTON

Mrs. Fannie Ted Long Evans, 55, wife of Albert Evans and a former resident of Manteo, died in Lexington, N. C., at 3:15 P. M. Sunday, December 23. Funeral was at the old home, Tyro Baptist Church, Davidson County, at 3 P. M. Monday. She was formerly a teacher in the Manteo High School, and had lived in Newport News several years before returning to Lexington. Numerous floral offerings as well as cards sent during her illness of several months, attested the esteem of Manteo people.

Beside her husband, she is survived by a son, Robert Long Evans; her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Long of Lexington; three brothers, Ray, Lashner and Fair Long, and a sister, Mrs. R. C. Hoskins, all of Davidson County.

BIRTH OF DAUGHTER

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Midgett, Manteo, are the proud parents of a seven pound baby girl, born Wednesday, December 26th. Mrs. Midgett is the former Mildred Tillet of Wanchese, and has been a telephone supervisor in Manteo for some time.

MANTEO NAVY MAN IS CHEMICAL WARFARE UNIT

Learning about chemical warfare is William H. Midgett, aviation machinist's mate, third class, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. St. Clair Midgett of Box 153, Manteo, and husband of the former Miss Eunice M. Knight of Coinjock.

Midgett entered the Naval service in Sept., 1948, and received his recruit training at U. S. Naval Training Center, San Diego, Calif. He attended Manteo High School. The course in shipboard chemical warfare is conducted at the Fleet Training Center, Norfolk, Va. Graduates are qualified to use chemical defense equipment aboard ships of the Navy.



PUPPY LOVE SOMETIMES LEADS TO A DOG'S LIFE

The Old Sea Captain was in quite a jolly mood on this fine May morning. He had strolled down to the Cape to look at the sea, in order to make his weather forecasts. He was never quite himself during any day that he failed to take a good look at the water, and he was evidently well pleased with what he saw. He was whistling a tune, somewhat high-pitched and off key, as he sat on the porch to await his friend, the Drummer, who was trying to get the storekeeper to stock up with toilet soap, castor oil and baby pants.

"Now, why be you anxious to sell these things now," asked the Old Sea Captain of his young friend.

"Lots of young folks got married last year on this Coast," said the Drummer. "You know a man in my business has to be on his toes and keep posted, and he has to keep ahead of the game. I know what's soon to be needed by everybody in my territory and I'm out to beat the cussed mail order catalogs this year."

"Ah, ha!" snorted the Old Sea Captain. "I don't know which is the worse for our folks, mail order catalogs are a curse to the country, taking all our money away, and early marriages keep young folks from having any money all through life."

"You think too many young folks got married?" asked the Drummer.

"I think too many young folks got married young," said the Old Sea Captain. "I think so for many reasons. One is, they haven't had enough experience to know what it's all about. They mistake spring fever and warmer weather for some other kind of symptoms. They think they have the real thing when it's only 'puppy love' and if they would wait a little longer, they might make a better choice. Women of any age rarely ever use their heads in getting married. It seems anything that wears pants can get a woman to marry him."

"If they did use their heads, not many men would find any women who would ever have them," said the Drummer. "It's a good thing women let their hearts rule them." "And let their hearts blind them," added the Old Sea Captain.

"I guess you're right," said the Drummer. "If a woman loves a man, she'll believe any kind of a lie he tells her."

"A man who didn't lie to a woman would soon find himself without her," observed the Old Sea Captain. "Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Applesauce makes them both gayer and grander." "Young folks are not the only ones subject to applesauce," said