

The Water Log



January 2009
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Flotilla 9-10
Fort Myers-Cape Coral

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Vessel Tracking System under development – Chalmers Sechrist – Flotilla 9-10

VTS is the acronym for Vessel Tracking System that enables Watch stands to pinpoint the location of our Auxiliary vessels in real time and without the time delay of radio confirmation.

Work commenced in May-June 2008 when the FC Donna Stull asked Frank Lann to look into VTS systems being used or planned in SW Florida. Frank and I visited flotillas in Venice, Charlotte Harbor, and Marco Island. In addition, it was learned that the Naples flotilla was using a VTS similar to the system at Marco Island. It became clear that different system configurations were being used by the various flotillas. The DSC Polling feature of VHF marine radios is used to determine

the latitude and longitude of a vessel and a DSC Polling radio with GPS is installed on the boat.

Following the visits to other flotillas, a search of the literature using GOOGLE, and communication with several hardware and software providers, it was decided to design and implement a simple, low-cost VTS using a DSC Polling radio, a laptop computer with navigation software installed along with a C-MAP nautical chart for the flotilla 9-10 AOR. Testing of the VTS began in early September when the system was taken to the homes of Pete Bardis and Dan Godfrey...Their boats (on lifts in their back yards) had DSC Polling

radios and GPS chart plotters installed with their MMSI numbers programmed into the radios. The tests were very encouraging. With the VTS located at the OPS Center, testing continued when Pete and Dan used their boats during VSP patrols in September and October. The most recent test occurred on 22 DEC 2008, when the new DELL desktop computer was installed in the VTS system at the OPS Center, and used to determine the position of Dan Godfrey's boat located on the lift in his backyard.

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Looking for News

The Water Log wants to hear from you. Without your input, the newsletter would not exist.

If you have any updates, news, boating adventures that would be of interest to our Flotilla, do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at (fernando49@optonline.net) or cell 816 305 5378.

Vessel Tracking System, cont.

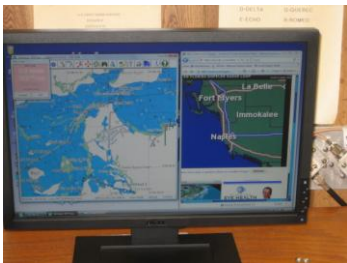
Cary Crittenden monitors VTS display



The VTS is a useful adjunct to radio watch standing. When the watch stand "polls" the patrol vessel and requests its position, the boat's radio responds by sending a packet of data to the VTS at the OPS Center that includes the latitude and longitude of the boat. These values appear on the LCD display screen of the OPS Center radio. In addition, an icon representing the position of the boat appears superimposed on the C-MAP chart displayed on the computer screen.

When the CGSTAFMB requests the lat. and long., of one of our patrol vessels, the watch stander simply "pings" ("polls") the vessel and within seconds the lat. and long. appears on the radio's display screen. A position icon appears superimposed on the C-MAP nautical chart on the computer screen. One advantage is that voice communication is not necessary to determine the vessel's position. In addition, security is enhanced because the position information is not shared with the public on Channel 82A.

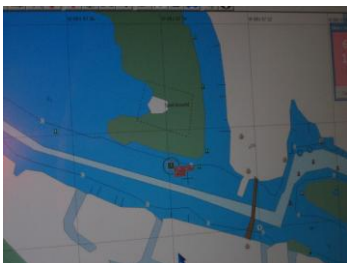
C-map and Doppler Chart



It was a team effort that included Pete Bardis, Dan Godfrey, and me. We are still in the Testing phase of the VTS as there is more work to be done. For example, we need to add the vessel COG and SOG to the data provided by the VTS. This can be done with a revision of the navigation software. In addition, we want to add a feature that connects all the position icons on the computer screen so that a continuous vessel track is produced consisting of a series of line segments.

VTS testing commenced in Late September/early October using the VTS at the OPS Center and patrol boats of Pete Bardis and Dan Godfrey.

Matanzas Pass Visual



At the moment, there is no formal/official training program. When the VTS is at the OPS Center, the radio watch stander (thus far, Jack Durkin, Anne Roethke, Dan Kasper, Armando Ingratta, Gary Crittenden) is shown how to "ping" (aka "poll") the patrol vessel. It is a logical and simple process involving turning a knob on the radio and then pushing the knob to send the Position Request data packet to the vessel. The patrol vessel radio then returns a data packet that gives the latitude and longitude of the vessel position. Thus far, patrol boats involved in the VTS testing phase were operated by Dan Godfrey, Pete Bardis, Bob Zarranz, and Jack Salis

As of 30 DEC 2008, we have a new DELL desktop computer integrated into the VTS system. Additional patrol vessels must be equipped with a DSC polling radio that connect to a GPS, with the MMSI number programmed into the radio. Additional watch standers will have to be shown how to "ping" the vessels on patrol. At this point, we are still in the testing stage and should have an update in our next issue.

Meet Jeff Mahl - Fernando Licopoli FSO-PB

Springville Elementary School Greets the Thomas Flyer



Remember when you were a kid and you could almost bet that the first assignment your teacher would give you upon returning in September was the dreaded "What I did over my summer vacation" essay?

For most of us, our summers were just plain boring and we had to make up half the stuff to get through the assignment.

Well it may not have been a summer vacation, but our very own Flotilla 9-10 member Jeff Mahl went on an extraordinary adventure that would knock the socks off our elementary school teacher.

Some of you may not be aware of this, but Jeff has a direct connection with automotive history. His great grandfather, George Shuster, accomplished a challenge that compares to Columbus's crossing the uncharted Atlantic, Admiral Byrd's expedition to the South Pole, or even Lindbergh's crossing of the Atlantic.

In 1908, George Schuster race from to New York to Paris, goin east to west, and still stands today as the longest automobil contest in history. The fact that was the longest race was amazing enough, but in addition Jeff's great grandfather was the winning driver, mechanic, and navigator all at the same time.

He endured harsh weather, quicksand, mechanical breakdowns that would bring tears to an ordinary mortal, chartered over land using a homemade sextant and Mongolian land pirates to name a few of the challenges he met in the 169 day event.

Last October Jeff had the rare opportunity of reliving part of his grandfather's adventure by acting as the historical consultant and driver in the "The Longest Automobile Race Centennial" that retraced the North American portion of the Great New York to Paris Race of 1908.

The Centennial race was to cover the entire distance that included crossing the Pacific via airlift, entering China, Mongolia, Russia and eventually Paris.

Unfortunately, the political climate in China prevented the race to unfold in its entirety and the race kept to its original New York to San Francisco run. Even so, the entrants were all in vintage cars and included a recreation of 1908 Thomas Flyer. This was no ordinary recreation as most use modern components. The vehicle, built by Jeff's good friend and associate Rodney Rucker, was in itself an antique 1914 Lea France truck chassis modified with the Thomas's roadster bodywork.

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Jeff at the Shuster gravesite



Nautical Terms and their History* – Inspired by Dave McDonough, FSO-PE

Before the mast

Literally, the position of the crew whose living quarters on board were in the forecabin (the section of a ship forward of the foremast). The term is also used more generally to describe seamen as compared with officers, in phrases such as "he sailed before the mast."

Binnacle List

A ship's sick-list. A binnacle was the stand on which the ship's compass was mounted. In the eighteenth century and probably before, a list was given to the officer or mate of the watch, containing the names of men unable to report for duty. The list was kept at the binnacle.

Boot camp

During the Spanish-American War, Sailors wore leggings called boots, which came to mean a Navy (or Marine) recruit. These recruits trained in "boot" camps.

Clean Bill of Health

This widely used term has its origins in the document issued to a ship showing that the port it sailed from suffered from no epidemic or infection at the time of departure.

Coxswain

A coxswain or cockswain was at first the swain (boy servant) in charge of the small cock or cockboat that was kept aboard for the ship's captain and which was used to row him to and from the ship. The term has been in use in England dating back to at least 1463. With the passing of time, the coxswain became the helmsman of any boat, regardless of size.

This Day in Coast Guard History –

5 January 1883-

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon, the crew of the Quoddy Head Station discovered a schooner at anchor. The weather was bitter cold, with a gale from the northwest. The men got the boat out and pulled to the vessel. She proved to be *Clara Dinsmore* from Boston. There were four men on board, one of them a passenger. With her sails iced up and splitting, she was in need of assistance. The keeper took charge and got the vessel under way with the sails she had left and beat her up the bay to her destination at six in the evening

Evidence of Jeff's brush with Quicksand!



Jeff with folks from Twin Springs Ranch, Nevada



San Francisco!



Jeff accompanied the participants from the starting point in Times Square to Springville, NY and then rejoined the group in Tonopah, Nevada to finish the Race in San Francisco on November 7.

The trip to Springville was especially satisfying for Jeff as this was the birthplace of George Shuster. It was in Springville that Jeff first heard of his grandfather's exploits. Arriving in early October, the whole town came out to meet the entire entourage of vintage vehicles and drivers. The Springville Elementary School, all 700 children, took time off to greet Jeff and the rest of the contingency with waving flags recreating the same greeting that George Shuster met when traveling across the USA. The School presented a wreath to Jeff and the cars then moved on past the site of George Shuster's Dodge Brothers dealership, and finally ending at the Shuster's gravesite in Springville Cemetery. A military ceremony accompanied the laying of the wreath along with the playing of taps. To say it was a moving ceremony would be an understatement.

After Springville, Jeff left the group of participants only to meet up November 4th in Tonopah, Nevada where Jeff's accurate retracing of his grandfather's tracks got Jeff into a bit of a bind!

Through researching Shuster's diary and matching old photographs with new ones, Jeff was able to locate the creek where George Shuster crossed on his way to San Francisco.

The diary warned of quicksand and lo and behold, Jeff, in attempting to cross the creek on foot, found himself sinking in the very quicksand his grandfather described! Luckily, for Jeff a helping hand pulled Jeff, who was waist deep in the stuff, out of the quicksand and back to safety.

In talking with Jeff, I learned a great deal more about George Shuster and his courage, ingenuity, and determination to go on in spite of the extreme cold and traversing land totally devoid of roads, resources, and communication.

One of the more interesting facts that I learned was that Shuster was self taught in the art of celestial navigation and fabricated a sextant to get across the frigid plains. In addition, the first seat belts ever used on an automobile were devised by the American team as a necessity to keep the sleeping companion from falling out of the open car!

There were many of moments of downright yanked ingenuity. One of the most interesting was fabricating nails to fabricate the broken teeth from a pinion gear. In addition, here I thought calling AAA was strenuous!

Next year the race will take place again, but this time the objective is to cover the entire New York to Paris run. Jeff is already planning to attend and will, as he did this year, act as the historical consultant for the event. We know this much, Jeff will know where the quicksand on the next go around!

Change Of Watch 2008

CWO3 Gene Gibson swears in FC Dan Godfrey and VFC Dennis Cherney, DCP John Tyson watching



Flotilla 9-10's Change of Watch was held at the Italian-American Club, Cape Coral on 5 December 2008.

Comments were made by CWO 3 Gene Gibson, who thanked the Flotilla' members for their continuing support and emphasized the importance of the Flotilla's role as a force multiplier. Additional thanks were made BM2 Eric Risener, Flotilla Liaison, Fort Myers Station.

John Tyson, DCP, recognized the Flotilla's efforts in 2008 and installed, Dan Godfrey , Flotilla Commander and Dennis Cherney, Vice Flotilla Commander. Flotilla Staff Officers were installed and a number of awards were given.

See our website

<http://www.a0700910.uscgaux.info/>

to see the 2009 Flotilla Staff Officers

Flotilla 9-10

3414 NW 1st Street
Cape Coral, FL
33993

Crew Training

Working toward QE in January Ray Knoll, Dan Godfrey put together a training opportunities for crew candidates. Bill Gulliver prepares for side tow on the Carol D.



About Our Organization...

The US [Coast Guard Auxiliary](#) is a volunteer service organization, civilian in nature, whose purpose is to assist the [United States Coast Guard](#) in any of its missions except direct law enforcement and military actions. As the civilian volunteer arm of Coast

Guard Forces, we volunteer time, talent, boats, radios, and aircraft. We receive special training in order to work effectively with the Coast Guard, which is now an integral part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Our flotilla covers areas of South West Florida waters in support of **USCG Station Fort Myers Beach** and [USCG Air Station Clearwater](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.a0700910.uscgaux.info/>

FLOTILLA 9-10

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