

Cape May Star and Wave

157TH YEAR NO. 30 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, July 27, 2011 50¢



Jacob Jones survivor's grandson dives wreck

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

Among the 11 survivors was Joseph "Paul" Tidwell of Tuskaaloo, Ala. Paul, 92, who retired from the Navy as a Master Chief still remembers that tragic day vividly and recently came back to Cape May to pay his respects. His son Jim, and grandson, Eric, have always had a deep interest in the elder Tidwell's story ever since they first heard it. Jim said he and his siblings, Joe and Janet, didn't hear the story until they were in their late teens or older, because their father never spoke of the experience.

CAPE MAY - It was February 28, 1942 when 11 men were brought to Cape May after spending hours in the wintry seas, enduring a tragedy, which most have never heard of. These men were the only survivors of the USS Jacob Jones Naval Destroyer that had been sunk by torpedoes from a German submarine just 32 miles southeast of the city.

Before the attack by German U-boat U-578 occurred, the USS Jacob Jones was circling the burning wreckage of tanker R.P. Resor, which was torpedoed the previous day east of

"He never talked about it," Jim said. "We asked him about it a couple of times but he didn't say much." Eric, who has continued the



Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

Top, Eric Tidwell and his father Jim Tidwell speak with Rusty Cassway on the way out to dive the site, about 32 miles from Cape May, where the USS Jacob Jones was sunk during World War II. Above, diver Gene Peterson goes over the side of the Research Vessel Explorer to dive the wreck site. Inset at left, an underwater photo provided by the dive team shows Peterson, left, and Eric Tidwell.

three to four years and wanted to see the Jacob Jones before he missed his shot. Peterson said he was thrilled to be asked by Eric to take part in this particular dive given the circumstances.

"This is going to be a rare opportunity, diving down with someone whose grandfather is a survivor," he said before the expedition.

He wanted Eric to have the ultimate experience and take

the dive to see the Jones for himself, so Peterson contacted Brian Sullivan, Rusty Cassway, Bart Malone and Steve Gatto of the R.V. (Research Vessel) Explorer in Cape May. This boat crew has been diving for years, searching and investigating the hundreds of shipwrecks along the coasts of New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland - many of the them military vessels from WWII.

"People don't realize how close that war was to home," Gatto said. "We're history buffs, and this is history."

This particular quest marked Malone's 2,450th northern Atlantic dive.

The group set the dive date for Friday, July 22. Leaving at 9 a.m., it took over an hour and a half to reach the dive site, with Eric and Jim anx

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SPORTS

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USLA events highlighted, B1

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CAPE MAY

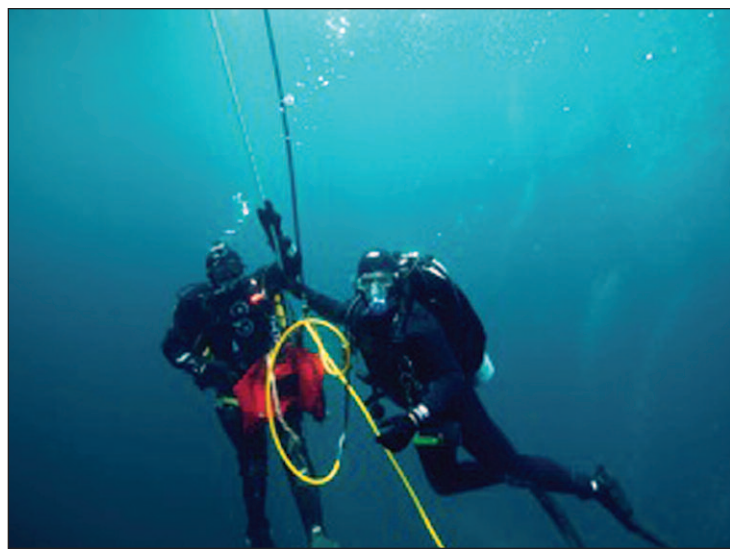
Community Events, A4

TIDES

July/August 2011
Eastern Standard Time

	High	Low		
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
27	5:53	6:17	11:25	
28	6:44	7:04	12:37	12:16
29	7:32	7:49	1:22	1:06
30	8:18	8:33	2:05	1:56
31	9:03	9:17	2:48	2:45
1	9:49	10:02	3:31	3:35
2	10:37	10:49	4:14	4:27
3	11:26	11:38	5:00	5:22

Moon Phases
New Moon, Aug. 1, 30
First Quarter, Aug. 8
Full Moon, Aug. 15
Last Quarter, Aug. 23
Perigee, Aug. 7
Apogee, Aug. 21



Barnegat Light. It circled the ship for two hours searching for survivors before resuming its southward course. There were 145 men aboard the 120-foot vessel when it went under attack in the early hours of the morning. The torpedoes struck the ship's side, completely destroying the bridge, the chart room, and the officers' and petty officers' quarters.

Most of the men aboard were killed by the initial blasts, but those who survived abandoned ship and dove into the fiercely cold waters. It took around 45 minutes for the vessel to go below the surface. As she sank, the depth charges exploded, killing many of the men who had survived the torpedo attack. Those remaining floated on the canvas-bottomed life rafts praying for help to appear on the horizon, and hours later it finally came. There were only 12 men brought back on the USS Eagle 56 ship; one of whom passed away enroute to Cape May.

Tidwell family tradition of military service, is presently a Naval commander fighter pilot and special weapons operator. He found out a few years ago there were people diving the wreckage of the Jones and as a licensed scuba diver, he decided to celebrate his 40th birthday by seeing the aftermath of what his grandfather endured nearly 70 years ago.

He contacted Gene Peterson of Atlantic Divers in Egg Harbor Township, who located the wreckage in the 90s. Eric said prior this dive, he'd always gone scuba diving in warmer, tropical waters like Key West - but never in the north Atlantic. This dive was also the deepest he ever attempted - nearly 120 feet.

"I've always wanted to dive to the wreckage and it could be my last chance to," he said. "I feel it's going to give me an even greater appreciation of what they went through."

Eric is being stationed in Atsugi, Japan for the next

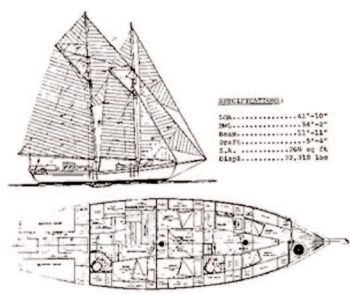
Maritime Museum idea still alive

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Late last year there was an eleventh-hour attempt to save the Solarium and use it as a maritime museum.

Kevin Maloney, a founding member of the Cape May Maritime Museum and Education Center (CMMMEC), led an attempt to save the Solarium and have it moved to Delaware Avenue. The idea was to put it on a city-owned lot between the Nature Center of Cape May and the Rutgers Marine and Coastal Science lab. City officials lauded the idea, but the governing body was not willing to fund moving the Solarium, or delay its demolition to make way for a new Convention Hall. Even though the Solarium went the way of the wrecking ball, that did not dash the hopes of those interested in creating a maritime museum in Cape

May. "Looking back, nothing has changed," Maloney said. "People really embrace and love the idea of a maritime museum. More and more it



seems like it's the right thing to do."

Maloney said he believes a maritime museum would only result in positive exposure for the community. He said the CMMMEC is seeking to create alliances with other organizations and is looking at various programs to pro-

vide quality experiences for people who visit the proposed museum.

Although it lacks a building, the CMMMEC exists as a federal 501-c-3 non-profit. The group has a board of directors, and Maloney and his wife, Sandy, have attended Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation classes picking up information on grants and functioning as a non-profit. He said for now the board has established a vision and mission statement, and is still coming up with a strategy for creating the museum/education center. He said they have been looking at other museums in the area as models for what they are trying to accomplish.

Maloney said this area has an extensive maritime history. Initially, it was whaling that attracted sailors to the Cape May area. Gradually, boat builders followed.

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Avoid heat stroke: drink water before you are thirsty

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

unusual to get five calls off the beach in a short amount of time.

"In three hours we took five people off the beach," he said.

CAPE MAY - The hotter than normal temperatures affecting 37 of our 50 states have been felt in the Cape May area.

On Sunday, the Cape May Beach Patrol had more 911 calls for heat exhaustion than it did for water rescues or assists.

There were five 911 calls for medical emergencies, July 24, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. One was a C-Spine injury at the First Avenue Beach, which according to Fire/Rescue Division Chief Jerry Inderwies Jr. said resulted in a victim being medevaced. The other four were all apparent heat exhaustion.

Inderwies said it's typical for his department to be busy in the summer, but it's



"Elderly people knew it was too hot and stayed home. Some of these younger people, maybe, were dehydrated or had a late night before and overdid it," he said. Inderwies said people, especially if they have been consuming alcohol, need to drink plenty of water before going out for a day in the sun.

"You really have to hydrate before -

Please see Water, page A3



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