

Welcome to the Cuttermen's Association, an organization dedicated to the sailors of the Coast Guard fleet past, present and future. We are now well over a hundred members, men and women, officers and enlisted, active duty and retired, and a few special friends of cuttermen. Consider yourselves organizational plankowners! We'll need your talent and commitment to make this Association successful. I'd also like to offer a special welcome to those dozen or so members who have already purchased lifetime memberships. Thank you for your faith and support, and continue to spread the word about our new group.

Throughout my career I've wished for a national Cuttermen's Association. Thanks to each of you this is now a reality. The life of a cutterman is not an easy one and it shapes a character that is uniquely honest, incredibly hard-working, and very practical...as well as inevitably tolerant of a wide range of personalities. That is a group of resourceful, fun people that I want to remain in touch with beyond retirement. Besides, not just anyone is willing to listen to our silly sea stories one more time. Those of us who have shared the joy of a perfect sunrise, a perfectly running plant, a harmonious and focused crew after a big bust, a stormy transit or a successful SAR case know the value of a good yarn.

We are a non-profit social organization that provides a place for past and future shipmates to connect, a source of mentoring for cuttermen still on active duty, and eventually a collection point for information that should prove interesting to active duty and retired alike. We're still setting up and sorting out, so please bear with us. We are powered solely by volunteers, including the demanding jobs of webmaster and Treasurer. Now is a great time to contact us and obtain a chance to shape our organization through heading or joining a committee. Take a look at our By-laws and the website to see if there is something you'd like to influence. We welcome your thoughts and efforts.

Board members and I will serve only one year during this founding period. Once things are up and running, elections on or about April 13th, 2011, will determine our course from there. We anticipate a national convention in DC to discuss By-laws, validate plans, and elect new leadership. Watch for details over the next few months.

All good organizations promote healthy and thoughtful debate. We will be no exception, and have already found an issue that has introduced the spice of discussion among members - the degree of affiliation the Cuttermen's Association will share with the Surface Navy Association (SNA). Some were hoping to be a chapter under SNA and others wanted to remain completely separate. More opinions are welcome. For now until we receive a vote from the Membership, we will be financially and organizationally separate. We are also working with the Board of SNA to create an opportunity for those who would like automatic dual membership (with a single check) to be able to choose and obtain it. Look for updates in future newsletters, and consider volunteering to lead coordination efforts including a joint convention, dual membership and 'lash-up' working or discussion groups.

Another related but less contested issue we had to immediately deal with was the caveat "charitable" along with the caveat "non-

profit" in our By-laws; clarity was needed to enable proper tax filing. We currently do not have the support structure needed to obtain and show cause for "charitable", so for now we are just "non-profit". This will be addressed further in our April convention. SNA has a pro bono SWO lawyer, but the services of an active duty or retired cuttermen lawyer would be greatly appreciated.

We are working on guidance to establish local chapters of the Cuttermen's Association in response to several requests already received. We have to work out the cost and funds-sharing details, and create charters and guidance to govern how they are managed, but we are working as quickly as we can. I encourage you to meet monthly (it's every second Wednesday in DC) to share sea stories, recruit new members, and discuss the way ahead.

Our website includes a list of lost cutters, the list of master cuttermen, the oldest commissioned cutter currently in service, and the names of our Gold and Silver Ancient Mariners. Look over our website (www.cuttermen.org). Contact us if you would like the Association to consider adding original content that you've created and are willing to maintain.

I look forward to laying out the trackline of our organization, honoring our profession, and touting the successes of cutters and cuttermen around the world and throughout history. We set a goal of 1790 members in our first year and I know together we can attain it. Thanks for your dedicated efforts in getting our association underway!

Respectfully,
Brian Perkins
President, Cuttermen's Association