



CHICAMACOMICO LIFE SAVING STATION



KEEPERS' LOG

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAMACOMICO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

RODANTHE, NORTH CAROLINA

APRIL 2018

2017-18 Beach

Apparatus Drill

by Larry Grubbs, Keeper

Starting on June 1, 2017, 12 men began the process of recruitment, equipment checks, maintenance and training to bring the Beach Apparatus Drill back to Chicamacomico. Our first public drill was performed on July 6, 2017. After a 17 year hiatus, those of us whom had done it before were thrilled to be back.

In all, 770 man hours were dedicated for repair, training, equipment maintenance and actual drills.

Most of the team thought that we would finish the year without uniforms, so when we received them mid-July, the guys were very excited. Historical accuracy adds a different feel and presentation to the drill that is important and draws the crowd in to the mid-19th century.

During the season, a total of 23 children and one small adult were allowed the opportunity to ride down in the breeches buoy.

We watched as the crowd sizes slowly grew on an almost-weekly basis. We had the first \$1,000 day in the recent memory in the gift shop.

We participated in an event that had been at least 2 years in the workings: Training the Junior Leadership Program squad from Camden High School, allowing those young, future USCG women and men the opportunity to perform the drill. Even more importantly, they had opportunity learn about, and gain some respect for, their USLSS heritage. It was a great event, enjoyed by all of us who participated. We began what we hope to be an annual tradition of a Thanksgiving week drill and cookout. That special event drew over 100 people and raised over \$300 for the association at the cookout.

The return of the drill, and, in particular, the local civilian team has generated conversation within the community that all of us have experienced, generating support and enthusiasm. I think the fact that 10 out of the 12 men involved



2018 Beach Apparatus Drill Team; Back Row Left to Right. Rob Wernock, Rob Huggett, Larry Grubbs, David (Otto) Carson, Ryan Albaugh. Front Row: Justin O'Neal, Steve Simmons, Mike Daugherty, Andrew Hannah. Not Shown: Pat Irwin, Rick Albaugh.

were either former Surfmen or a person who rode in the breeches buoy as a child, upholds this sentiment.

We feel that the season was a complete success. We had some learning moments along the way, and some lessons learned the hard way due to our team being inactive for 17 years. We will get back to the same level that we were back in the 90's but it will take a couple of years, and the commitment of a core group of guys who return every year to get us there. I am very confident that we have that core group in place, but we do need to do some recruitment to bolster manpower. I think our success this year will make that easier than it was starting from scratch last season.

Thank you all for allowing us the opportunity to do the drill again, you may never know how important it really is to some of us.

We are currently in the process of replacing the carriage for the Lyle Gun. Upon inspection earlier in the season, it discovered that, while we weren't worried that the carriage was going to catastrophically fail, it did need to be replaced and taken out of service. The carriage we currently use is an original (circa 1874), and needs to be paired back up with the original bore, which is upstairs in the museum. The new carriage is being built by Surfmen from the team, with collaboration from the blacksmiths at Island Farm, saving the association \$4,000 and creating a unique opportunity for working together with craftsmen from a fellow not for profit. (Continued on page 3)

Supporting your Station

I wanted to talk just a little bit about “planned giving” which is also called “legacy giving”. This type of giving is not for current operations or projects but rather to establish (or enhance) organizational income into the future. It entails earmarking money for an existing endowment fund (CHA has such a fund administered by the Outer Banks Community Foundation) or establishing a fund that supports a designated organization; it is possible to set up a fund that supports more than one organization. Another type is a donor direct fund in which you (or your designees(s)) choose who, what and where you disburse money.

Planned giving can also include designating proceeds from an IRA or 401K account or even transferring ownership of such an account to a not for profit. There may be significant tax benefits to this kind of giving. Should you consider this option to your tax deductible giving, you should seek advice from one familiar with the process: the Outer Banks Community Foundation (Lorelei Costa at 252-261-8839) has expertise in this area and can work with you and your tax advisor to explore this option.

One can also designate any portion of your estate to a not for profit either directly or through an endowment fund. Our website has an endowment page under the “Support our Station” tab: you are wel-

come to share that page with your financial advisor or estate planner.

Having said all that, I want to point out that the CHA Board has raised \$350,000 over the past 3 years to get the site ready for the Mirlo

Commemoration: We are now seeking funds for the event itself. You can be a sponsor, put an ad in our week long program, or simply donate through our website www.chicamacomico.org. Hope to see you at the Station: I think you’ll like what we’re doing.

On behalf of Chicamacomico I’d like to thank:

Pogie Worsley & Kellogg Building Supply for the 8x8’s

Bob Fink for transferring all our Computer files.

Chris (DCAC) for housing the Dwyer paintings over the winter and displaying the shakes.

Kevin and Nelson (Island Farm Smithys) for the metal work on the Lyle gun carriage.

Rick Albaugh for use of his workshop and precision power tools for the wooden portion of the carriage.

Jami for opening the NPS artifacts vault for Juanita’s research team

Ray Meekins (Seaboard Surveying & Planning) & John DeLucia (Albemarle Engineering) for the site work pursuant to the restrooms.

With Warm Regards,
John Griffin, President
Chicamacomico Historical Association

THE VIEW FROM THE TOWER

by John Griffin, president

Board of Directors Chicamacomico Historical Association, Inc.

John Griffin, President
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Amy Etherington, Secretary
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Ryan Gentry



Staff

Dinah Beveridge
Site Manager
Elaine Haines
Ron Watkins
Elijah Midgett

Chicamacomico Life Saving Station
23645 NC Highway 12
Rodanthe, NC

To volunteer, call (252) 987-1552

Save the Date!



The Chicamacomico Historical Association
Annual Meeting
will be held on December 2.

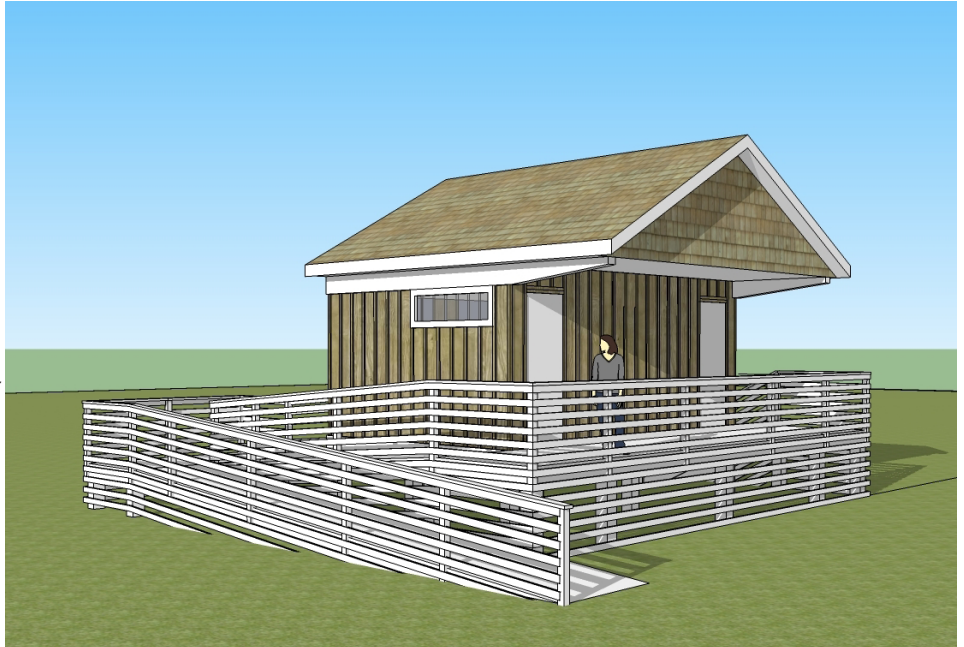
Beach Apparatus Drill

(Continued from page 1)

We have a special event presentation with BBQ Chicken cookout and Beach Apparatus Drill on April 5, 2018. We are hoping that this will become an annual event, like the Thanksgiving pig pickin' and drill. Our intention for 2018 regular season is to perform the drill starting Thursday, June 7 thru Thursday, September 6th, a total of 15 weeks. Training, due to the April drills, will resume in early March.

Anyone reading this who knows of a potential surfman for the team, please contact us.

Sincerely,
Larry Grubbs
Keeper



We are currently accepting bids for the construction of a new restroom, as shown above. The deadline for bids is Friday, April 6, 2018.

Calling all Chicamacomico Re-enactors!

On Thursday April 5 at noon, Dixie Burrus Browning will be at Chicamacomico to sign her new book "The Warfield Bride". While the book is set at a fictional Life Saving Station, Paragon Shoals, the cover is a Michael Halmiski photograph of the re-enactment of the breeches bouy drill at Chicamacomico.

We would love for you to join us, maybe even sign a book or two and pose for some publicity photos/video. Come any time between noon and 1:30 and stick around to see the drill at 2PM (that is if you're not still on the drill team!)

Dixie Burrus Browning
John Griffin, CHA President
Larry Grubbs, CHA Vice President & Drill Team Leader

Volunteers build working model of Lyle Gun

A popular piece of the attractions of the Chicamacomico Station for the last 20-some years has been the Beach Apparatus Drill (aka, the breeches buoy demonstration). Arguably, the highlight of the Beach Apparatus Drill is the firing of the Lyle Gun. At the command "READY!" and with a mighty roar and cloud of white smoke, the small (continued on page 7)



The completely rebuilt carriage of the Lyle Gun as it is set for a firing test

MIRLO Centennial COMMEMORATION

Original Painting by Asaen Dwyer

1918
August 16
2018



ORGANIZED BY
Chicamacomico Historical Association

100th

Anniversary of the MIRLO RESCUE

CENTENNIAL EVENTS

August 13, 2018 through August 17, 2018

COMMEMORATION SPONSORSHIPS

ARTISTS AND BUYERS OPENING RECEPTION

Monday, August 13, 2018

Collection of cedar shakes salvaged from the 1911 building and hand painted by local artists will be on display from August 3rd through August 25th.
Dare County Arts Council Gallery
300 Queen Elizabeth Ave, Manteo, NC

MIRLO RESCUE EXHIBIT AND RECEPTION

Tuesday, August 14, 2018

Mirlo artifacts provided by descendants of Chicamacomico.
Coveyard of the Atlantic Museum
59200 Museum Drive, Hatteras, NC

DESCENDANTS DINNER AND GUIDED TOURS

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Descendants enjoy a catered dinner on the lawn of Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station. Guided tours of historic Hatteras Island will be available throughout the day.
Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station
23645 NC Hwy 12, Rodanthe NC

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF

100th ANNIVERSARY OF MIRLO RESCUE

Thursday, August 16, 2018

Opening Ceremonies, Keynote Speaker, Beach Apparatus Drill, Station Elizabeth City Flyover, Wreath Laying, Premiere of Mirlo Film, and Evening Entertainment
Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station
23645 NC Hwy 12, Rodanthe NC

LOCAL ART FAIR AND FESTIVAL

Friday, August 17, 2018

20 Local Artists, Locally-sourced Food, and Live Entertainment
Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Community Building
23646 NC Hwy 12, Rodanthe, NC

PRESENTING SPONSOR \$25,000

Only Two Available

- Prominent Recognition as Sponsor of All Centennial Events
- Acknowledgment in Promotional Materials (including press releases, flyers, hand cards, signs, event calendars, and promotional products)
- Logo displayed on print, internet, and social media advertisements
- Recognition and Speaking Opportunity at Centennial Celebration
- Choice of Inside-Front Cover or Inside Back Cover Full Page Display Ad in Event Program
- Prominent Recognition on Event Program Sponsors Page
- Ten 2019 Season Passes to Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station
- Presenting Sponsor Commemorative Keepsakes

CENTENNIAL SPONSOR \$7,500

Only Five Available

- Sponsorship of One Day of Events During Centennial Commemoration
- Acknowledgment in Promotional Materials Promoting Specific Day (including press releases, flyers, hand cards, signs, event calendars, and promotional products)
- Full Page Display Ad in Event Program
- Recognition on Event Program Sponsors Page
- Five 2019 Season Passes to Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station
- Centennial Sponsor Commemorative Keepsakes

SURFMAN SPONSOR \$5,000

- Acknowledgment in Promotional Materials Promoting Specific Day (including press releases, flyers, hand cards, signs, event calendars, and promotional products)
- Half Page Display Ad in Event Program
- Recognition on Event Program Sponsors Page
- Two 2019 Season Passes to Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station
- Surfman Sponsor Commemorative Keepsake

WATCHMAN SPONSOR \$2,500

- Half Page Display Ad in Event Program
- Recognition on Event Program Sponsors Page
- Two 2019 Season Passes to Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station
- Watchman Sponsor Commemorative Keepsakes

BREECHES BUOY SPONSOR \$1,000

- Recognition on Event Program Sponsors Page
- Breeches Buoy Sponsor Commemorative Keepsakes

Maintenance Projects

by Sandy Sanderson

As with all structures in the severe weather environment that encompasses the station attention to maintenance and upkeep of site is a constant task.

The foundation on 1911 building has been painted and cracks repaired.

The fence surrounding the building is in much need of repair however all the gates have been replaced and painted.

Concerns for the safety of our many visitors prompted the addition of steps and railings on the east porch of the 1911 structure along with improved railings at porch entrance.

The porch on the east side of the 1911 building has been scraped and painted along with the ceiling. The large porch ceiling has been painted and ceiling fixtures replaced to cover



Renovations to the south side of the 1911 Station is now complete (above). Work on the north side of the building will not limit visitation to the Station.

the naked light bulbs. Further painting of the porch is in the works.

A 40ft flag pole will be placed inside the fence on the southwest corner of the 1911 building and should be standing tall by opening day. This should garner increased

visibility and give the station a distinction that it lacks.

Border posts will be replaced by 8x8 white posts with rope along entrance and north and south boundaries.



A PROCLAMATION

DECLARING AUGUST 16, 2018 AS MIRLO COMMEMORATION DAY & AUGUST 13 THROUGH 17, 2018 AS MIRLO COMMEMORATION WEEK

WHEREAS, the Coast of NC was the scene of a little known theater of Submarine Warfare during WWI; and

WHEREAS, on Aug 16 1918 German U-boat 117 torpedoed the Mirlo, a British Tanker fully loaded with fuel so desperately needed by our allies in England; and

WHEREAS, the explosion, 7 miles off the coast of Rodanthe, was noticed by Surfman Leroy Midgett who was on watch in the tower of the Chicamacomico Coast Guard Station; and

WHEREAS, Keeper John Allen Midgett, Jr immediately called his crew to action and, in spite of 15 foot seas and the lingering threat of U-boat activity, launched Surfboat 1046 into the sea; and

WHEREAS, in an ocean aflame with fuel, "Captain Johnny" and his surfmen rescued 42 of 51 British seamen and got them safely ashore; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of that daring rescue, John Allen and his crew were awarded the Gold Life Saving Medal as well as the Grand Cross of the American Cross of honor; and

WHEREAS, so impressed by this selfless effort King George VI had struck Gold Medals for John Allen and all of his crew; and

WHEREAS, equally impressed the British Board of Trade honored John Allen with a Silver Loving Cup; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his lifetime of service to the USCG, John Allen has had 2 USCG Cutters named in his honor including the recently Christened National Security Cutter "John Allen Midgett, Jr"; and

WHEREAS, as we reflect upon a World War of 100 years ago, we note that August 16, 2018 is the 100th Anniversary of this rescue; and

WHEREAS, events such as the Mirlo rescue highlight what we all know about the rich history of our islands and honors the men and women who have braved the hardships of life on the Outer Banks for generations and risked their personal safety to keep countless ships safe.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Dare County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaims August 16, 2018 as Mirlo Commemoration Day and August 13 through 17, 2018 as Mirlo Commemoration Week in Dare County. This the 19th day of March, 2018.



Attest:

Robert Woodard, Chairman

Gary Lee Gross, Clerk to the Board

Easter Week Activities at Chicamacomico

Chicamacomico Life Saving Station & Museum opens for the 2018 season on Monday, April 2.

Chicamacomico is one of the most complete sites of all remaining Life Saving Stations in the nation. The site is open Monday through Friday from 10 AM – 5 PM and Saturday 10 AM – 4 PM. Admission fee is \$8

Site restoration work has continued over the winter with new shingles on the 1911 station, a reorganized gift shop and repairs to the parking area.

On Thursday April 5, from Noon to 2 PM Dixie Browning will be on hand to launch and sign her latest book “The Warfield Bride”, an historical novel set at an Outer Banks Life Saving Station in the late 1800’s.

At 2pm the re-enactment drill team will perform the beach apparatus drill. The drill team is made up of local men, some of whom are sons of earlier re-enactment drill team members, much the way the Life Saving Service was made up of generations of local men.

At 5pm a chicken barbecue dinner will be offered at the RWS Community Building across Highway 12 from Chicamacomico Life Saving Station.

2018 is the centennial of the Mirlo rescue. The Mirlo was a British tanker of 6997 tons with a crew of 51. She had taken aboard a full cargo of oil and gasoline in New Orleans, Louisiana and was passing Cape Hatteras on her way to New York Harbor. The year was 1918 and there was heavy Uboat activity off the East coast. US and German interaction offshore caught the eye of the Life Savers at Chicamacomico and resulted in one of the most heroic rescues of all time. A detailed account of that famous local rescue can be found at our website www.chicamacomico.org.

The opening week for this Mirlo Centennial Year will feature several events. All are open to the public with admission fees which are good for the entire week.

Later in the season, we will publish our summer programs and beginning August 13 we will offer a week of events commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Mirlo Rescue. See Chicamacomico.org or our FB page for up-to-date information or call the site at 252-987-1552. The station email is clss@embarqmail.com

GR Jan 19, 2018

Lyle Gun (Continued from page 3)

bronze cannon throws its 18 pound projectile with attached line towards the “shipwreck” (wreck pole), so that the “rescue” can begin.

In the mid 1990s the Chicamacomico Historical Association took on the responsibility for conducting the Beach Apparatus Drill historical re-enactment from the National Park Service. An original Lyle Gun (and its carriage) were purchased, as well as a modern, firing reproduction Bronze Gun “C” and firing mechanism was built by South Bend Replicas. Since that time the Drill has been performed using the reproduction gun attached to the original 100 year old (at least) carriage.

At the end of last summer it was agreed that it was time to retire the original carriage and reunite it with its original gun, which up to this time has been displayed “carriageless” in the Chicamacomico Museum.

The search for a new carriage was fairly easy insofar as there was only one place that would be willing to make an exact reproduction. Unfortunately the cost of this reproduction was quite a bit more than what was available for the project, so it was time to think outside the box.

Thinking outside the box quickly led us to a pair of local

craftsmen, Nelson Edmondson and Kevin Hopkins. These gentlemen were willing to take on our project using their particular talents in blacksmithing and metalworking. Nelson is the resident blacksmith at the “Island Farm” site on Roanoke Island while Kevin has his own metalworking shop.

The tricky part was that the original Lyle Gun carriages were manufactured at a factory that was state of the art (for the late 1800’s, anyway). Forging and crafting by hand (which is how Nelson and Kevin did it) was undoubtedly more labor (and skill) intensive than the originals required. While Nelson and Kevin did the “ironwork” Larry Grubbs, Rick Albaugh, Steve Simmons and John Griffin took on the woodworking part of the project as well as final assembly.

In the end we ended up with a pretty nice reproduction carriage for use in the Drill, and we think the fairly obvious “hand-crafted” appearance adds character. The gun and new carriage were subjected to repeated firings somewhat more powerful than what we use for the Drill to ensure the safety of our guests as well as ourselves. We look forward to many years of using our historical re-creations and are pleased to have a complete original Lyle Gun and carriage now available for our guests to view in the museum.