

"Preserving Michigan's
submerged history
for now and forever"

The Explorer



MICHIGAN SHIPWRECK RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Dec. 2005 Vol 3

Holiday Greetings

Ahoy MSRA Members,

2005 has gone by *the board* rather quickly this year considering that this was a *windfall* search season with two discoveries. *By and large*, we have our members to thank for the *whole nine yards*. Without your continued support, MSRA could not *fathom* how we would be able to continue in our pursuit in solving maritime mysteries, without the *first rate* input of our members.

Back in 2001 after our discovery and documentation The HC Akeley, we were *pressed into service* to form MSRA. Realizing that most of the shipwrecks off West Michigan would be in water over 200 feet, we felt we had to *overhaul* our search methods to work in deeper conditions, and gave ourselves *leeway* considering the added level of difficulty. Imagine then how we have been *taken aback* as we look back over those four years and are overwhelmed to realize we have *hit the bullseye* and averaged one wreck discovery per year!

As we enter 2006, those of us with MSRA believe we are in *ship shape* and *know the ropes*. We intend to *bear down*, and focus our efforts on the 2006 searches which are *in the offing*. Clive Cussler is again sending his team to continue the search for Flight 2501. And pending a successful fundraising event on May 6th to generate our search *slush fund*, David Trotter will return to continue the pursuit of our top five wrecks. And we will let the *cat out of the bag* and tell you that, due to positive PR this summer, we have been given promising coordinates from the DNR of a mid-lake anomaly seen on their sonar equipment while fish-counting. The *scuttlebutt* is that this could be any number of lost ships, but we will reserve guesses until we verify that it is manmade and not geological.

It's time to *cut and run*, as we come to the *bitter end* of this greeting. We hope this letter is not too *garbled* in it's use of maritime jargon. On page three we offer the origins of many of these maritime phrases that have been incorporated into our everyday language, as a fun way to end the year.

Hope your Christmas is *Ship Shape and Bristol Fashion*,

Valerie Olson van Heest

Lake Michigan's Lost Aircrafts

Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates remains dedicated to the discovery of area shipwrecks. But many other pieces of West Michigan's history lie off the coast of West Michigan, as became all too clear as we researched the loss of Flight 2501 which is still under investigation by our team. David Trotter's recent discovery of a vintage bi-plane in Lake Huron, has also increased our awareness of airplane losses in the Great Lakes. MSRA has also "run over" small targets while surveying local waters for shipwrecks. A majority of them are natural, maybe hard bottom, but some of them could very well be man made. Is it possible that MSRA may one day discover a missing aircraft in the course of our hunt for shipwrecks?

Dave Trotter's bi-plane discovery in Lake Huron (www.shipwreck1.com) inspired me to look into missing aircraft in our neck of the woods. I was surprised to find so many light aircraft have vanished off our shores. Many of them were lucky to get a small article mentioning their losses in local papers. The Coast Guard launched short searches after their disappearances were reported, yielding little wreckage, or nothing at all. In a couple cases, bodies of passengers or pilots washed up weeks or months after the crashes. Here are some of the stories and approximate positions of these losses:

October 10, 1979 - Plane Missing Over Big Lake

SOUTH HAVEN (UPI) – Authorities have come up empty handed in efforts to locate a single engine plane believed to have crashed in Lake Michigan off shore from South Haven, Coast Guard officials say. The active search for the craft, which vanished from air traffic controllers' radar screens Wednesday while heading from Palmyra, Wis., to Detroit, likely will be halted officials said. Search aircraft and boats covered a 1,500-square mile area of Lake Michigan Wednesday but found no trace of the missing plane, a Piper PA24 with one person aboard, Coast guard spokesmen said. The pilot, Stewart Greger of Palmyra, was heading to Detroit on a business trip. The plane was about 25 miles west of South Haven when air traffic controllers in Chicago

lost contact with it. Coast Guard rescue crews from Chicago, Traverse City, South Haven and Holland were dispatched to the area but found no wreckage.

July 04, 1984 - Cessna 172P went down off St. Joseph.

Pieces of wreckage and the body of the pilot were recovered from the lake, approximately 4 miles southwest of St. Joseph. We are not sure if this aircraft was recovered.

February 03, 1992, - Beech 95-BE55 disappeared

The aircraft was being vectored for the back course localizer approach to runway 9 at Benton Harbor, when radar contact and communication was lost. This approach is entirely over the waters of Lake Michigan. During search operations, a Coast Guard helicopter found oil sheen and three aircraft tires with portions of the landing gear attached to them along the flight path.

Further search efforts failed to produce any additional wreckage or human remains. One month and eleven days after the disappearance of the aircraft, a body, which was positively identified as that of the aircraft's passenger, was found washed up on the shore. Eight days after that discovery, a body positively identified as that of the pilot was also found washed up on the shore. Autopsy revealed the cause of death in both cases was drowning. The aircraft is still missing.

March 15, 1993 -1974 Piper Cherokee Arrow missing.

Jim Hysong was last seen as he climbed into a two-seat plane at Toledo Suburban Airport on. He had rented it for a short trip to Jackson, Michigan, where he planned to take a test to become a flight instructor. Hysong was an accomplished pilot. Investigators have two main theories about what happened that day: either Hysong decided to commit suicide for some unknown reason by crashing the airplane into Lake Michigan, or he stole the aircraft with the intention of selling it. According to Federal Aviation Administration radar logs, a plane piloted by Hysong took off from Toledo Suburban about 10:15 a.m. and climbed to



Piper Cherokee Arrow

A Special Thank You

It takes more than just your average diver to explore the deepest shipwrecks. MSRA's board members are fully capable of exploring, cataloging and documenting shipwreck discoveries located in depths of up to 180 feet of water. But, beyond that, we bring in the experts — divers who are trained and who have the equipment to descend into the inky depths of Lake Michigan to depths of 250 or even 300 feet! Holland diver Jeff Vos, Saugatuck's Todd White and Robert Underhill of Kalamazoo are the "A Team" in West Michigan when it comes to technical diving. Breathing a special mix of helium and nitrogen, these divers have photographed and videotaped the remains of the S. S. Michigan which lies in 275 feet of water off Holland. This is a depth that only a few highly trained divers can survive. Their skills and technical knowledge have enabled MSRA to fully investigate and document its latest find. Some of the most exciting underwater video we've ever seen will be incorporated into a new documentary which will debut on May 6 at our annual shipwreck show at the



Knickerbocker Theatre in Holland. Our special thanks go out to Jeff,



Todd and



Bob — MSRA's technical dive team!

Lake Michigan's Lost aircrafts, *Con't from page 1*

an altitude of 4,800 feet as it headed northwest. But the plane bypassed Jackson Airport to the east by several miles. The plane continued past Grand Rapids and Grand Haven and went about 15 miles out over Lake Michigan before disappearing about 83 minutes after the flight began. Volunteer pilots from the Michigan Chapter of the Civil Air Patrol searched for the air for wreckage of the plane for six weeks, first on land and then on water. Nothing was ever located. Every part of the \$40,000 airplane was listed as stolen and entered on the national databases of the Law Enforcement Information Network and the National Crime Information Center in July 1994. Since then not a single piece of the aircraft has ever turned up.

November 21, 1993, - Cessna 172I disappeared

N35549, registered to Eagle Air, Inc., of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and operated by an instrument rated commercial pilot, was observed to depart Kalamazoo, Michigan, with the intended destination of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The airplane and pilot have been missing since that time. A search located nothing. No flight plan was on file. The airplane is presumed destroyed and the pilot is presumed to have sustained fatal injuries. The Coast Guard and the Civil Air Patrol initiated a search. They searched for three days, before abandoning the search for lack of sighting evidence of the airplane. The search determined the airplane never reached its intended destination on November 21, 1993. No other airports reported seeing the airplane and no wreckage was found.

April 20, 1997- Beech 95-C55, N242BS disappeared

At 2105 eastern daylight time, the plane was observed on radar to descend from 10,000 feet mean sea

level until being lost on radar, about 3,000 feet. The location was about 13 miles west of Grand Haven, Michigan, over Lake Michigan. Debris was located in that general area, on the surface of the lake. The airplane was presumed to be destroyed. The pilot and one passenger are presumed to have sustained fatal injuries. The 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight was operating on an IFR flight plan. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the closest land-based weather reporting station to the impact location. The flight departed Marshall, Michigan, about 2030 with a planned intermediate stop of Medford, Wisconsin, and final destination of Fargo, North Dakota. The first recorded radio contact with the Grand Rapids (Michigan), FAA, Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT), Arrival Radar, occurred at 2030, when the pilot of N242BS radioed to obtain the IFR clearance and routing to the initial destination, stating, "Two four two bravo sierra's off Marshall, IFR to mike delta zulu." The pilot received an IFR clearance from the ATCT. At 2103, the pilot called the ATCT requesting, "... do you get me on radar with...?" There were no further recorded radio communications with N242BS. Debris was located on the surface of Lake Michigan, about 13 miles west of Grand Haven, Michigan, on and after April 21, 1997. The debris was presumed to be from N242BS.

Further MSRA research will probably yield more missing planes in our search areas. Being such small targets, the chances of us "seeing" one of them while side-scanning for large shipwrecks is remote. But as technology

advances, we believe the final resting spots of these aircraft, and in many cases, their pilots, will be revealed. As with most things, it's just a matter of time, and effort.

By Ross Richardson ●



The Actual Plane! -

MSRA has continued to research the circumstances of Flight 2501, as we prepare for the 2006 search. During the spring of 2005, as we prepared for last year's search, we were fortunate to receive unprecedented media coverage, due in large part to Clive Cussler's association with our group. Because of that coverage we were contacted by a number of individuals with some association to the plane crash. Among them was Jackie and Muryl Eldrid, who believe they heard the crash from their bedroom that night, Punky Harold and Doug McCain who each believe they saw the flash of the plane's explosion that night, John Flemming from Big Rapids, who was the County Health Inspector in charge of beach closures and clean up, Larry Otto, a Coast Guard Officer involved in the search for the plane, and many other individuals with interesting connections.

At the time of our debut showing "The Disappearance of Flight 2501", May 7, 2005 we had not yet found or been contacted by any relatives of the victims. We were concerned about their reactions to the search effort if and when we did connect. Just two weeks following that event, we received an email from Ken Skoug II and Ken Skoug III, the son and grandson of Ken Skoug, a Remington Rand Executive who lost his life that night while returning to his family in Minneapolis. And most recently, we were contacted by William Kaufmann and his sister Brandi Holstein, whose mother, Mrs. Winfield Kaufmann also perished on the plane. She was on board that flight after accidentally missing her previous scheduled plane to Seattle. The families have been very supportive of MSRA/NUMA's efforts to find the wreckage of the plane. The discovery of the plane will hopefully, after 55 years, offer some aspect of closure for these families.

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Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates, is a Michigan non-profit corporation, whose mission is to Preserve Michigan's submerged maritime history. To that end, the organization's work includes research, exploration, documentation and education regarding historic shipwrecks within Michigan waters, with an initial emphasis on the area off West Michigan. MSRA works in cooperation with State Agencies. As a Holland-based volunteer-driven organization, MSRA relies on memberships, fundraising events and grants to continue its work.



MICHIGAN SHIPWRECK
RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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Nautical Jargon for Everyday Conversations

Whole Nine Yards - Yards are the spars attached at right angles across a mast to support square sails. (Yardarms are either side of a yard.) On a fully-rigged three-masted ship there were three major square sails on each mast. So if the nine major sails were all employed at the same time, the whole nine yards were working.

Ship shape and Bristol fashion - Everything in perfect order.

Ahoy! - This old traditional greeting for hailing other vessels was originally a Viking battle cry.

To Know the Ropes - There was miles and miles of cordage in the rigging of a square rigged ship. The only way of keeping track of and knowing the function of all of these lines was to know where they were located. It took an experienced seaman to know the ropes.

Fathom - Fathom was originally a land measuring term derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "faetm" meaning to embrace. In those days, most measurements were based on average size of parts of the body, such as the hand or the foot. A fathom is the average distance from fingertip to fingertip of the outstretched arms of a man.. about six feet.. The word was also used to describe "taking the measure of" or "to fathom" something.

First Rate - Implies excellence. From the 16th century on until steam powered ships took over, British naval ships were rated as to the number of heavy cannon they carried.

Leeway - The weather side of a ship is the side from which the wind is blowing. The Lee side is the side of the ship sheltered from the wind. A lee shore is a shore that is downwind of a ship. If a ship does not have enough "leeway" it is in danger of being driven onto the shore.

Windfall - A sudden unexpected rush of wind from a mountainous shore which allowed a ship more leeway.

By and Large - Currently means in all cases or in any case. From the nautical: by meaning into the wind and large meaning with the wind: as in, By and Large the ship handled very well.

Flight 2501 Search Continues - *Can't*

Most surprisingly, we were contacted by Chuck Boie, the President of an aviation club in Milwaukee, whose members have had an interest in studying this accident. Through Mr. Boie, we have met, amazingly, a retired 93 year old pilot, Captain Freddie Stripes, who was piloting a Capital Airlines plane June 23, 1950 only 10 minutes behind Flight 2501. Turbulence was so bad, he chose to ground his plane to wait out the storm. It is for that reason that Captain Stripes is here to talk with us today and offer insights into the crash of Flight 2501.

Through Mr. Boie, we have also uncovered a most interesting piece of history in connection with Flight 2501. An aviation photographer, Leo J. Kohn and member of the Milwaukee aviation club, discovered a photograph of the DC-4, numbered N-95425 used for Flight 2501. While we have found many photos of DC-4's of this vintage, this is the only known photograph of the actual plane which crashed in Lake Michigan off South Haven in 1950.

And the research has not stopped. As everyday passes, we wonder who we will hear from next. It is connections like this that remind us of what is really important about shipwrecks, plane crashes and other disasters, natural and manmade -- the people! The people who were lost, the people who survived and the families left behind. It is the sincere hope of the MSRA Board that our work on Flight 2501 will touch these people in a positive and uplifting way. ●

Cut and Run - If a captain of a smaller ship encountered a larger enemy vessel, he might decide that discretion is the better part of valor, and so he would order the crew to cut the lashings on all the sails and run away before the wind.

Bullseye - A round eye through which a line is led, usually in order to change the direction of pull, or a thick piece of glass set flush in the deck to admit light below.

In the Offing - Currently means something is about to happen, as in - "There is a reorganization in the offing." From the 16th century usage meaning a good distance from shore, barely visible from land, as in - "We sighted a ship in the offing."

The Bitter End - The end of an anchor cable is fastened to the bits at the ship's bow. When of the anchor cable has been paid out you have come to the bitter end.

Overhaul - To prevent the buntline ropes from chaffing the sails, crew were sent aloft to haul them over the sails. This was called overhauling.

Slush Fund - A slushy slurry of fat was obtained by boiling or scraping the empty salted meat storage barrels. This stuff called "slush" was often sold ashore by the ship's cook for the benefit of himself or the crew. The money so derived became known as a slush fund.

Bear Down - To sail downwind rapidly towards another ship or landmark.

Overwhelm - Old English for capsize or founder.

Let the Cat Out of the Bag - In the Royal Navy the punishment prescribed for most serious crimes was flogging. This was administered by the Boson's Mate using a whip called a cat o' nine tails. The "cat" was kept in a leather or baize bag. It was considered bad news indeed when the cat was let out of the bag.

Taken Aback - A dangerous situation where the wind is on the wrong side of the sails pressing them back against the mast and forcing the ship astern. Most often this was caused by an inattentive helmsman who had allowed the ship to head up into the wind.

Garbled - Garbling was the prohibited practice of mixing rubbish with the cargo. A distorted, mixed up message was said to be garbled.

Press Into Service - The British navy filled their ships' crew quotas by kidnapping men off the streets and forcing them into service. This was called Impressment and was done by Press Gangs.

Scuttlebutt - A butt was a barrel. Scuttle meant to chop a hole in something. The scuttlebutt was a water barrel with a hole cut into it so that sailors could reach in and dip out drinking water. The scuttlebutt was the place where the ship's gossip was exchanged. ●

Mark Your Calendars

May 6, 2006

Knickerbocker Theatre
86 East Eighth St. 7:00

Please join MSRA and the Joint Archives of Holland as we present *Mysteries and Histories, An Evening Beneath The Inland Seas*, MSRA's annual event.

The Evening with feature programs on the discovery of the SS MICHIGAN and the ANN ARBOR NO. 5. Ralph Wilbanks will also be back to share with us the story of Clive Cussler's search for John Paul Jones' wreck of the BONNE HOMME RICHARD. Details will follow in the new year.